MONDAY
March 17, 2025

BENGALURU
CITY EDITION
20 Pages ₹ 6.00

THE HINDU

www.thehindu.com

INDIA'S NATIONAL NEWSPAPER SINCE 1878

https://newsth.live/fb
https://newsth.live/x
https://newsth.live/ig

RNI No. KARENG/1970/49945

Vol. 56 • No. 64

Printed at » Chennai » Coimbatore » Bengaluru » Hyderabad » Madurai » Noida » Visakhapatnam » Thiruvananthapuram » Kochi » Vijayawada » Mangaluru » Tiruchirapalli » Kolkata » Hubballi » Mohali » Malappuram » Mumbai » Tirupati » Lucknow » Cuttack » Patna

MAJOR BLAZE

Fire at thermal power plant in Thoothukudi

SOUTH » PAGE 11

RESCUE MISSION

SpaceX crew docks with ISS

WORLD » PAGE 18

MANICKAM TAGORE INTERVIEW

'We oppose gunpoint imposition of policies'

NEWS » PAGE 15

DATA POINT

Ukraine's main backer, U.S., changes stance

Move leaves a void in its defence against Russia

OPINION » PAGE 13

PERFECT START

Norris wins a chaotic Australian Grand Prix

SPORT » PAGE 19

31 killed in U.S. strikes on Yemen; Houthis hit back

The rebels say their armed forces launched an attack on a U.S. carrier in the Red Sea; 'hell will rain down upon' the militant group and Iran, its main backer, Trump warns; Tehran slams America

Agence France-Presse
Associated Press
SANAA

The first U.S. strikes against Yemen's Houthis since Donald Trump took office killed 31 people on Saturday evening, the rebels said, with the United States President warning "hell will rain down upon" the Iran-backed group if it did not stop attacking shipping.

The Houthis said they launched an attack on a U.S. carrier in the Red Sea on Sunday, hours after the deadly strikes.

Iran's Minister of Foreign Affairs Abbas Araghchi condemned the deaths, and said Washington had "no authority" to dictate Tehran's foreign policy.

The Houthis, who have attacked Israel and Red Sea shipping throughout the Gaza war, said children were among those killed.

Deadly hit: Smoke rises from a location reportedly hit by U.S. air strikes in Sanaa, Yemen, on Saturday. AP

Attacks on Sanaa, as well as on areas in Saada, Al-Bayda and Radaa, killed at least 31 people and wounded 101, "most of whom were children and women", Houthi Health Ministry spokesperson Anis Al-Asbahi said.

The Houthis had said earlier that the strikes "will not pass without response". "In response to this (U.S.) aggression, the armed forces conducted a military operation... targeting the US aircraft carrier USS Harry Truman and its accompanying warships," the group said in a statement, adding it had launched 18 missiles and a drone.

Mr. Trump, in a post on social media, vowed to "use overwhelming lethal force" to end the Houthi attacks, which the rebels say are in solidarity with Palestinians amid the Gaza war.

Mr. Trump also issued a stern warning to the group's main backer. "To Iran: Support for the Houthi terrorists must end IMMEDIATELY!" he said, adding it would be held "fully accountable" for any continued threats.

CONTINUED ON
» PAGE 14

Every noble attempt for peace with Pakistan met with hostility, betrayal: PM

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

Noting that all of India's attempts to foster peace with Pakistan have been met with hostility and betrayal, Prime Minister Narendra Modi has expressed hope that wisdom will prevail on the leadership in Islamabad to improve bilateral relations.

In a three-hour conversation with American scientist and podcaster Lex Fridman, who released the episode on Sunday, Mr. Modi emphasised his similarities to U.S. President Donald Trump, noting that Mr. Trump seems to have a clearer road map for his second term. With regard to China, he cited the return to normalcy on the border as evidence of the power of dialogue over discord and called for the neighbours to cooperate in the interest of global stability and prosperity.

> Since the 21st century is Asia's century, we want India and China to compete in a healthy and natural way. Competition is not a bad thing, but it should never turn into conflict
> **NARENDRA MODI**
> Prime Minister

Recalling his own swearing-in ceremony in 2014, Mr. Modi said he had specially invited his Pakistan counterpart, Nawaz Sharif, with the hope that the two countries could turn over a new leaf.

"This sent a clear message to the world about India's commitment to peace and harmony, but we didn't get the desired outcome... Yet, every noble attempt at fostering peace was met with hostility and betrayal. We sincerely hope that wisdom prevails upon them and they choose the path of peace."

Despite past tensions with China, Mr. Modi said he favours dialogue over discord. "Differences are natural. When two neighbouring countries exist, occasional disagreements are bound to happen... but our effort is to ensure that these differences don't turn into disputes."

CONTINUED ON
» PAGE 14

NEARBY

Relief for booksellers

BENGALURU
Following stiff opposition and much outrage from book publishers and sellers, the Union government has now taken steps to resolve the issue of high postal charges levied for sending printed books through India Post. » PAGE 2

Student dies of suspected food poisoning

MYSURU
A student from a Northeastern State died on Sunday due to suspected food poisoning at Malavalli in Mandya district, while scores of others have fallen ill. » PAGE 6

EDUCATIONPLUS » PAGES 6 & 7

Taking wing

Nascent hope: An Indian long-billed vulture sits with its chick atop a cliff at India's only vulture sanctuary, Ramadevarabetta, near Bengaluru, on Sunday. The season marks the fourth consecutive year of successful breeding at the sanctuary, a sign of hope for the endangered species. K. MURALI KUMAR

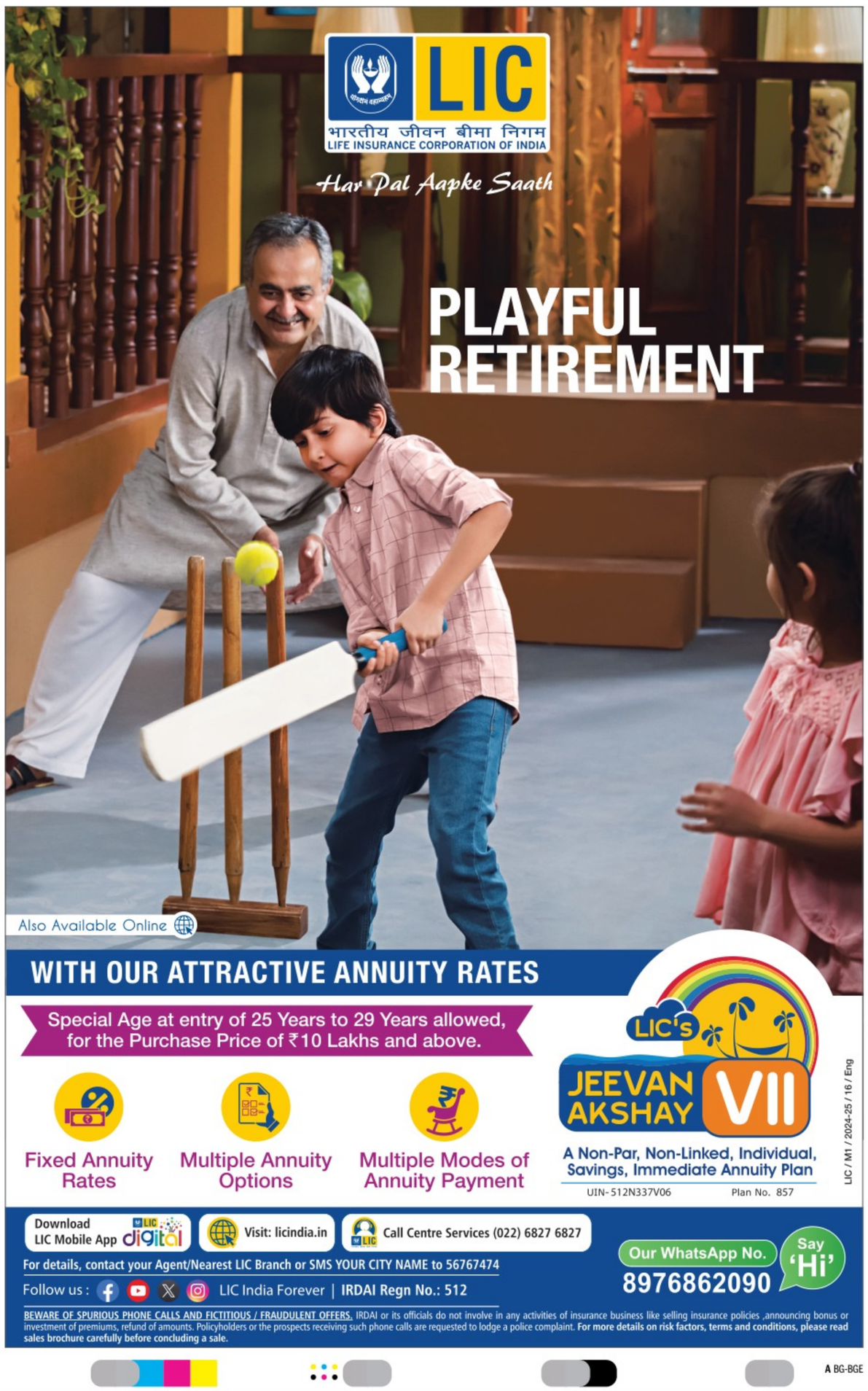
Tamil letter in logo to assert language policy: Stalin

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M.K. Stalin on Sunday contended that incorporating the Tamil letter 'ரூ' in the logo for the State Budget 2025-26 was to assert the State government's language policy. He said it was made into 'big news' by "those who did not like the Tamil language."

"We incorporated 'ரூ' to show how assertive we are in our language policy. That was it. But, those who did not like Tamil, they made it into big news!" Mr. Stalin said.

CONTINUED ON
» PAGE 14



Mangaluru police arrest two South Africans, MDMA worth ₹75 crore seized in Bengaluru

The Hindu Bureau
MANGALURU

Two South African women were arrested and 37.878 kg of synthetic narcotic drug MDMA, worth ₹75 crore, was seized, which according to the Mangaluru police was brought by a domestic flight from Delhi to Bengaluru. This is the highest value of drugs seized by the Karnataka police so far, according to Mangaluru Police Commissioner Anupam Agrawal.

Addressing presspersons here on Sunday, he gave the names of the accused as Bamba Fanta alias Adonis Jabulile, 31, a native of Agbovillae Africaanse sub-division, and Abigail Adonis alias Olijo Evans, 30, a native of Lieu De Naisance, Pretoria, both in South Africa.

Mangaluru Police Commissioner Anupam Agrawal with the CCB team that arrested two South African nationals for drug smuggling. H.S. MANJUNATH

Mr. Agrawal said the arrest of the two women was the fallout of further investigation by the Central Crime Branch (CCB) sleuths of Mangaluru into the arrest of Hyder alias Hyder Ali, an alleged drug peddler, in 2024, from whom 15 g of MDMA was seized. Based on the information from Ali, CCB sleuths arrested alleged drug peddler Peter Ikedi Belonwu, a Nigerian, in Bengaluru, from whom they recovered 6.248 kg of MDMA.

During the questioning of Belonwu, CCB sleuths got information about South African women flying down from Delhi to Bengaluru and delivering MDMA to fellow drug peddlers in Bengaluru.

The two women were reportedly flying down with MDMA every fortnight, delivering the drugs and flying back to Delhi within 24 hours of landing at Bengaluru airport.

CONTINUED ON
» PAGE 8

Kashvee Gautam — promising pace-bowling all-rounder waiting to conquer the big leagues

The 21-year-old, who overcame a career-threatening injury, made the most of her maiden WPL campaign with the Gujarat Giants, and hopes the performances will serve as a springboard to reach greater heights

EMMANUAL YOGINI

Rajdeep Saha
CHENNAI

February 25 marked five years since Chandigarh's Kashvee Gautam took all 10 wickets against Arunachal Pradesh in an Under-19 One-Day Trophy match.

Now 21 years old and playing for the Gujarat Giants in the Women's Premier League (WPL), much has happened with the pacer - a career-threatening injury, faith from her management at the domestic and franchise levels, resulting in a hunger and desperation to keep improving.

Comeback arc

Her comeback arc not only involved finding a way to bowl full tilt again but also slowly bringing in variations that can make her more effective with the ball.

"My ability to swing the ball inwards was always strong. I think the pace at which I bowl has increased. Recently, I bowled at around 110 kmph.

"My swing has become sharper and now I hit the deck hard while bowling. The more you watch cricket, the more you learn," Kashvee told *The Hindu* on the sidelines of the recently concluded iteration of the WPL.

The WPL was a perfect stage to show proof of concept, but she had to wait to earn her chance.

Tryst with injury

During the auction prior to the last season, Kashvee became the most expensive uncapped player, picked by the Giants for ₹two crore.

However, a fracture to the fifth metatarsal of her landing foot, sustained in December 2023, meant that her debut was delayed.

"My foot was in a plaster for six to seven weeks. Then, I had to walk on crutches. My rehab started slowly, a bit later because the bone wasn't healing quickly. First, it was batting. Then, I started jogging. Bowling came last.

"Initially, it was tough to keep her motivated when it was confirmed that she would miss WPL," Kashvee's coach Nagesh Gupta recalled.

"But she soon realised that she would have to fight with the injury in order to get better."

Kashvee was sidelined for almost 10 months and returned to full fitness only in October last year. However, she used this phase to learn a few lessons, which are bearing fruits now.

"It took some time but I learnt a lot. I worked on other things like my mental health. When I play now, those things are coming to use," Kashvee said.

It was during those tough months that the youngster learnt the value of being mentally strong.

"Mental health, at any level, plays a very important role. Until the time we aren't fit here (pointing to the head), we won't be able to express ourselves freely."

Friends in need

Kashvee also had a small group of well-wishers, her rocks, to help her get through it all. These included her family, Nagesh, and her wellness coach Sanjeevan.

"Their support was so strong that I never felt I was going through an injury," she said.

But there was one more person whose constant presence helped Kashvee, one of her closest friends, Kanika Ahuja.

Kanika, who played her second season with Royal Challengers Bengaluru, was due to play last year after she was retained by the eventual champion. Unfortunately, she too was ruled out of the campaign due to a stress fracture in her back.

For each other

While these injuries meant no franchise cricket for both, the old friends made sure to be there for each other.

"My bond with her [Kanika] goes way back to when I started playing in Punjab about seven years ago. Whenever we meet, it doesn't feel like we are seeing each other after a long time," Kashvee said.

"Our respective teams would train and we would sit together and collectively get that feeling of missing out, but we didn't have a choice. We supported each other during that phase.

"Even when we went home, we would make it a point to call each other at least once a week. Sometimes, we would even complain to each other about the time our injuries were taking to heal."

Kashvee recovered from her fracture just in time for the 2024-25 domestic season, and pleasantly surprised herself with her performances. In three tournaments, she took 17 wickets.

"I didn't expect to do a good job since I had little practice," she said.

Kashvee's most recent domestic outing was the Senior Women's ODI Challenger Trophy, a tournament she won.

"In Chennai, the wicket was quite flat. Bowling there helped me figure out a lot of things, which I have implemented here. My main aim in that tournament was to keep my economy low, and I was successful in doing that," she said.

Kashvee had the third-best economy in the ODI Challenger (3.85).

Better economy

Even in her maiden campaign, she had the best economy rate (6.45) amongst the top 10 bowlers in the Purple Cap standings, which helped her finish the season as the best Indian bowler with 11 wickets.

She edged ahead of Shikha Pandey - who also had 11 scalps - thanks to a better economy.

"For me, it's a good experience but there are nerves too. Playing in front of such huge crowds for the first time but it's becoming easier with every match," she said.

Apart from constricting the flow of runs quite well, she also stuck to her coach Nagesh Gupta's advice on how to look impactful in the WPL - by taking wickets.

Hitting the ball long

What also caught the eye of the coaching staff of the Giants during the pre-season camp was her ability to hit the ball long. Kashvee was eventually even tried out alongside Beth Mooney in the opening slot.

"That's (domestic pool) probably been our strength this year compared to previous years where we may have relied on a select number of players. In this tournament, we've had a number of contributors like Priya (Mishra) and Kashvee.

"We get quality overs out of them into our starting eleven. That's probably the main reason we're able to perform well this year," head coach Michael Klinger said at the end of the league stage.

Kashvee understandably hoped to repay the faith shown by the Gujarat Giants, and she did just that by playing a key role in helping GG make its first-ever Playoffs appearance.

THE GIST

- In the last WPL auction, Kashvee became the most expensive uncapped player, picked by the Giants for INR 2 crore. However, a fracture to the fifth metatarsal of her landing foot, sustained in December 2023, meant that her debut was delayed
- During the rehabilitation period, the pacer from Chandigarh found a companion in good friend and Royal Challengers Bengaluru player Kanika Ahuja, who was also sidelined by injury, to get through it all
- In WPL 2025, Kashvee repaid the faith shown by the franchise by taking 11 wickets, making her the best Indian bowler of the season - just ahead of Shikha Pandey thanks to a better economy rate. Moreover, her stingy economy of 6.45 is the best amongst the top 10 in the Purple Cap standings

Relief for booksellers: Centre to align Book Post tariff with earlier subsidised Book Packet rates

With the new Post Office Act coming into effect, Book Packet, the much preferred service to send books by publishers and small magazines was scrapped, and instead booksellers had to opt for the Book Post service, which was costlier

Jayanth R.
BENGALURU

Following stiff opposition and much outrage from book publishers and sellers, the Union government has now taken steps to resolve the issue of high postal charges levied for sending printed books through India Post.

With the new Post Office Act, 2023, coming into effect from June 18, 2024, the earlier Book Packet, the much preferred service to send books by publishers and small magazines was scrapped and instead booksellers had to opt for the Book Post service, which was costlier. To send a book that weighed less than 500 grams within a distance of 200 kms, it used to cost ₹30 under the Book Packet service and it had shot up to ₹45, 50% higher under the Book Post service. Following this Purushothama Bilimale, Chairman, Kannada Development Authority (KDA) wrote to the Ministry of Communications-Department of Posts in January flagging concerns.

A new, reasonably-priced product called 'India Post Parcel' has been introduced offering tracking facilities for retail and bulk customers. FILE PHOTO

In its response to his letter, the Department said that the subjective classification of products under the Book Packet category had been removed and these services had been merged into a single product - Book Post. The letter said that the tariff of the Book Post would be aligned to the previous Book Packet rates.

In his reply to Prof. Bilimale's letter, Prasenjit Chatterjee, Assistant Director General (PO Division), India Post, said that this was part of an ongoing product rationalisation initiative, under which the features of all existing products have been consolidated under a single umbrella product for each category.

Furthermore, he said that a new, reasonably-priced product called the India Post Parcel had been introduced, offering tracking facilities for retail and bulk customers. "This product can be used to send printed books. Bulk customers, such as printers, can now send parcels weighing up to 2 kg at nearly the same postage rate as the previous registered book packet containing printed books," he said.

Demand for speedy implementation

Welcoming the initiative by India Post, Prof. Bilimale said that the new service of India Post Parcel was very beneficial for wholesale booksellers and said that reverting back to the old tariff was also an important step. "India Post is one of the main channels to take books to the last village in the country and its services need to be reasonable," he said.

Book publishers have expressed happiness over this move and sought its early implementation. "It is good that the Union government has agreed to reduce the rates for sending books via India Post. We send 15 to 20 books to various parts of the State through book post every day. Since June last year, the cost of sending books shot up, not only eating into our margins, but also imposing a big burden on readers. India Post should immediately implement the reinstatement of subsidised registered book post service," said Dhananjaya, publisher, Jeerunde Pusthaka, Bengaluru.

BNP calls for citizen-centric governance, rejects Bill

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Members of Bengaluru NavaNirmana Party staging a protest at Freedom Park in Bengaluru on Sunday. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Members of the Bengaluru NavaNirmana Party (BNP) on Sunday sat on a day-long fast at Freedom Park creating awareness on the need to alter multiple provisions of the Greater Bengaluru Governance Bill, 2024.

They said they will move the Governor and High Court against the present form of the Bill. BNP instead argued for scaling down MLA and government control in municipal affairs, a feasible and workable decentralisation and autonomous city governance that would alter the structure of the Greater Bengaluru Authority in a way that allows for greater representation of citizens, councillors and local representatives.

Addressing the gathering, Srikanth Narasimhan, BNP Founder and General Secretary, highlighted four key demands - Mayor and council should have true power, more power to Bengalureans through ward committees and area sabhas, devolve powers to BBMP as per 12th Schedule of Indian Constitution, implement laws properly, bring in transparency and conduct elections on time. "We need a response to our four demands. Without citizen involvement in governance, the city's future is at risk. A decentralised governance model is essential. I urge residents to become ward leaders, engage in civic issues, and register to vote in BBMP elections to support responsible candidates," he said.

"We want to ensure that governance remains with the citizens. If this bill becomes law, citizen's responsibility will diminish significantly. Currently, our voice is nearly non-existent, and if this continues, it will vanish. If the GBGB goes through in its current form, we will take 4-5 steps back as a city," said Vishnu Reddy, zonal leader BNP.

The rally and the event saw hundreds of residents, civic activists, including actor Shruthi Hariharan, activist Brinda Adige and others participating.

Skit staged

The party also staged a skit featuring a dialogue between Nadaprabhu Kempegowda and Mahatma Gandhi, where actors playing the two icons questioned citizens about the state of Bengaluru today. While Kempegowda spoke of his vision for a world-class city – well-planned, well-connected, with beautiful lakes, greenery, parks, thriving markets, and clean neighbourhoods – Mahatma Gandhi emphasised the need for an empowered local government dedicated to good governance.

'Fuel line snag led to emergency landing'

Hemanth C.S.
BENGALURU

The Directorate General of Civil Aviation's final investigation report on an emergency landing by a trainer aircraft in an open field in Kalaburagi in June 2023 has concluded that blockage of the inlet valve of the high-pressure pump of the fuel system in a closed position resulted in engine power loss, leading to the forced landing.

On June 25, 2023, a two-seater Cessna 1725 aircraft of the Redbird Flight Training Academy with a flying instructor and a student pilot made an emergency landing in an open field after the aircraft lost power. After carrying out a forced landing, the instructor and the student came out of the aircraft unhurt. Following this, the DGCA had instituted an inquiry.

Metal debris in pump

The findings in the report further state that during the investigation, the Original Equipment Manufacturer (OEM) observed that the inlet valve of the pump was in a closed position due to metal debris found inside the pump and the debris did not originate from it.

The trainer aircraft after it made an emergency landing on a field near Pete Sirur village in Chittapur taluk of Kalaburagi district. FILE PHOTO

"The OEM recommended inspecting the fuel system for contamination. However, the inspection did not reveal any abnormality," the report stated.

On the day of the incident, the instructor and the student pilot took off from the Kalaburgi airport and after completion of sector flying for about 30 minutes and during the rate 1 turn practice, the instructor advised the student pilot to reduce the power by 2-3%.

"As soon as the student pilot reduced the power, in response, engine power was reduced to 1%. Immediately, the instructor realised the situation and took control, and tried to maximise the power. During this time, the aircraft responded for 1 to 2 seconds and increment of power up to 40% and dropped back to 1% again," the report said.

It further said that the instructor had made several attempts to restart the engine, but in vain and he subsequently declared engine failure following which the ATC advised the aircraft to "descend to circuit altitude and report flight insight". "Since the aircraft had completely lost power and the crew could not make it back to the airport, they decided to carry out forced landing in an open field near Kalaburagi Airport," the report said.

On the pilot handling the craft, it said he followed the emergency procedure, and the handling techniques adopted by the crew were not contributory factors.

Groups clash while playing Holi inside Lalbagh; three arrested

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Tension prevailed inside Lalbagh Botanical Garden on Saturday evening when a group of youngsters, reportedly in an inebriated state, clashed with another group over a trivial row while playing Holi.

The video of the incident went viral on social media causing much uproar, especially as both Holi colours and liquor are banned inside Lalbagh, exposing chinks in the security at the garden.

A group of families, hailing from Nepal, who are working in the city, gained entry into Lalbagh with Holi colours. As they were playing Holi, a tiff broke out between them over a trivial row. From the video, it can be seen that people were hurling abuses at and beating each other with sticks. The incident occurred at 5.30 p.m. on Saturday, creating fear among other visitors.

The video of the incident went viral on social media causing much uproar, especially as Holi colours and liquor are banned inside Lalbagh

Man beaten up

An umbrella-seller, identified as Amar, who intervened to pacify the groups, was also beaten up. Some visitors alerted the security at the garden, who rushed to the spot and after being unable to contain the fight, alerted the police control room.

The Siddapura police rushed to the spot, dispersed the agitated crowd and shifted Amar to a private hospital where he is recovering.

The police have also taken up a suo-motu case and arrested three people involved in the clash while efforts are on to track down the others who are on the run.

Lokesh Jagalasar, DCP (South Division), said that the situation had developed owing to two families clashing over a trivial row, which was brought under control.

Security upgraded

"The patrolling inside Lalbagh has also been revived and security has been upgraded to ensure no such incidents recur," he said.

Bank manager, three others held for cheating customer of ₹50 lakh

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The Girinagar police on Saturday arrested a deputy manager of a private bank for allegedly cheating a senior citizen of ₹50 lakh.

The accused have been identified as Meghana P.V., 31, a deputy manager of the private bank's Girinagar branch, apart from Shivaprasad, Anwar Ghouse and Varadaraj, all between 30 to 35 years.

Meghana, according to the police, used to assist the victim, who is around 76 years old, in maintaining a joint savings account with her husband in the branch. The complainant used to share the account details with the accused.

According to the complaint, the victim had recently sold her property and deposited around ₹1 crore in the joint account. During the investigation, the police found that Meghana, deceitfully made the complainant sign an RTGS form used to transfer money in the guise of Fixed Deposit (FD) renewed and transferred ₹50 lakh to the bank account of Ghouse.

The family, when checking the deposit found the discrepancies and raised a complaint with the cyber crime helpline before approaching the Girinagar police.

Based on the complaint, the police registered a FIR under Sections 316 (Criminal breach of trust) and 318 (Cheating) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) and arrested Meghana from Kerala, and her male friend Shivaprasad from Bengaluru. The police also arrested two others from Ankola who were part of the scam.

The police suspect that the accused, on behest of her male friend, transferred the money to Ghouse's account to be used for quick investment, with a plan to return the amount back later.

CLASSIFIEDS MART

TO ADVERTISE VISIT
www.thehinduads.com
Bengaluru: 98455 29981 ■ 080-22071826
Mangaluru: 0824-2417575 ■ 2417580
Hubballi: 0836-2338600 ■ 2335700

PERSONAL

CHANGE OF NAME

I, SATYARAJU Gunakala, S/O: Lukaiah Gunakala, R/O: 8, 20th H Cross, Ejipura, Vivek Nagar Post, Bangalore– 560047, Have Changed My Name To Sathyaraju Gunakala. Vide Affidavit 14/03/25

I, HARDIK Pandey, S/O: Hemant Pandey, R/O: No. 27, 1523, 17th CRS RD, A Block, Milk Colony, Subramanyanagar, Malleshwaram, Bengaluru, 560010, Have changed my Name to Hardik Hemant Pandey, Vide affidavit 14/03/25

I, Satya Rao Sunkara, H/No 101, Banaswadi, Bangalore -43 have changed my daughter's name from 'SUNKARA KIRANMAYI' to 'KIRANMAYI SUNKARA' vide Affidavit dt 14.03.2025.

CHANGE OF NAME

I, **SAVITHRAVVA**, W/o C.B. Umesha, aged about 40 years, R/at Sokke, Sokke Post, Jagalur Taluk, Davanagere District-577525, today at Bengaluru do hereby declare that both the names i.e. **SAVITHRAVVA VIRUPAKSHAPPA JYOTHI** and **GEETA SATHISH GANIGAER** are one and the same and refers to me only, after my marriage I have changed my name to **SAVITHRAVVA UMESHA C.B**, vide affidavit dated 15-03-2025, sworn before Advocate and Notary **UDAY KARIYAPPA .B.G** at Bangalore.

REAL ESTATE

10 ACRES Mango Farm for sale in Tamilnadu. Escape to tranquility with this beautiful 10–acre mango farm located in Madarahalli, right off the Tirupattur main road, Just 12 km from Tirupathur and 30 km from Krishnagiri with Two–side road access for easy transportation @ 40 Lakhs per acre. Brokers excuse. For more details contact 9894486840, 9994387850.

PUBLIC NOTICE

It is hereby informed to the public that my clients (1) Sri Gangadhar N P S/o late Sri Pothalaiah (2)Smt. Lakshmidevi W/o Sri Gangadhar N P have lost the original Will executed on 02.07.1982 by Rudrappa S/o Nanjappa, registered as Doc No. 82/1982-83, Page 242-246, Volume 81 of Book III, in the office of the Sub Registrar, Gandhinagar, Bangalore during 10.30 am, on 14.03.2025 in respect of property bearing No.12 (Old No.45) (PID No.5-67-12), (ePID No.1035726032) situated at 13th Cross, (Swimming Pool Layout) Sudheendra Nagar, Bengaluru.measuring East to West 44 ft. and North to South 30 ft., totally measuring 1320 sq. ft., bonded on the East by:Anjaneya Temple / Private Property, West by:13th Cross Road,North by : Property belongs to Mr. Maganna, South by : Property belongs to Chitaranjan. Our clients have lodged the online police complaint vide Lost Report No. 1521187/2025.
If any person/s who finds it, is requested to return the same to me at below mention address:

V. G. Murthy, *Advocate*,
Ananda and Hegde Law Associates,
#76-77, 2nd Main Road,
Sheshadripuram, Bangalore-20.
Mob: 9738330783
Bangalore
Date : 15.03.20025

Office of the Executive Engineer, Public Works Department, Chikkamagaluru Division, Chikkamagaluru

Short-Term Tender Notice No.: 32/2024-25 Date: 14.03.2025

In the Tender Notice seen above Tender is invited from eligible contractors for total 12 works through KPP Portal and 02 works through Manual, under Head of Account: 2059-80-051-0-08-200 Maintenance Expenditure, 8433 Deposit Contribution, 5054-03-101-0-02-132 District Main Roads Bridges, 5054-04-337-0-01-154 (Project) District and other roads - Improvements, 5054-03-337-0-01-154 (Project) State Highways - Improvements, 5054-04-337-0-01-154 (Project) District and other roads - Improvements, related to Sub divisions of Public Works Department, Chikkamagaluru District. Details of capabilities to undertaking or having implemented the works (as per Standard Tender Document KW-1, 2, 3 & 4) should be attached. Contractors can be awarded the contract only if they have the minimum eligibilities as mentioned in Act 3. Minimum Approx. Amount Rs. 2.50 lakhs and Maximum Approx. Amount Rs. 500.00 lakhs. For Manual, Eligible contractors should submit application requesting blank Tender Form after paying the prescribed fee from 21.03.2025 to 25.03.2025, obtain blank Tender Form on 01.04.2025 and submit filled Tenders within 5.00 PM on 04.04.2025 and for Tender to be submitted through KPP Portal for 12 works (Indent No. 19380, 19386 (2nd Call), 19793 (2nd Call) , 18586 (3rd Call), 19647 on 21.03.2025, Indent No. 20303, 20453, 20257 on 24.03.2025, Indent No. 20035, 19738 (2nd Call), 17026 (2nd Call), on 29.03.2025, Indent No. 20399 on 07.04.2025) tender should be submitted within 4.30 PM. For further details the case worker can be contacted during office hours.

Sd/- Executive Engineer, Public Works Department, Chikkamagaluru Division, Chikkamagalur.

DIPR/ckm/No.190/24-25/ksmca/1894

GOVERNMENT OF MAHARASHTRA

Public Works Division Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar

E-Tender Notice No. 410 OF 2024-2025

E-Tender for the following works In "B-2 Form" for the (01) Works is invited via online E-Tendering system from Contractor / Agency / Firm / Company of Eligible Class by Executive Engineer Public Works Division Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar (PH No.0240-2331174) on behalf of Public Works Department of Government of Maharashtra.

All details can be viewed and downloaded online directly from the Government of Maharashtra e-Tendering Portal **https://mahatenders.gov.in** on sub Portal of Public Works Department also on **www.mahapwd.gov.in** portal as per online tender Schedules.

Sd/-
Executive Engineer
Public Works Division, Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar

DGIPR/2024-2025/7085

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
Ministry of Finance, Department of Fiancial Services
DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL-1 KARNATAKA
4th Floor, Telephone House Builiding Rajbhavan Road Bangalore - 560001

Form No. 14 (See Regulation 33(2))
DEMAND NOTICE

Notice under Sections 25 to 28 of the Recovery of Debts & Bankruptcy Act, 1993 and Rule 2 of Second Schedule to the Income Tax Act, 1961.

RC No. 188/2024 IN OA No.1197/2020

KARNATAKA BANK LIMITED V/s SRI LOHITH REDDY

In the matter of (CH 1) Karnataka Bank Limited, Indiranagar Branch, No. 490, Ground Floor CMH Road, Indiranagar, Bengaluru, Karnataka - 560 038. **... Applicants**

Vs

(CD 1) Sri Lohith Reddy., S/o. Late Veerappa Reddy K. M. Flat No. 502, Indus Signature Apartment, House No. 72, Eshwar Layout, Indiranagar, Bengaluru, Karnataka - 560 038.
(CD 2) Sri Nakul Reddy, S/o. Late Veerappa Reddy K. M., Flat No. 502, Indus Signature Apartment, House No. 72, Eshwar Layout, Indiranagar, Bengaluru, Karnataka - 560 038.
(CD 3) Mrs. Jayashree V Reddy, W/o Dr. K. M. Veerappa Reddy, Res. at Flat No. 502, Indus Signature Apartment, House No. 72, Eshwar Layout, Indiranagar, Bengaluru, Karnataka - 560 038.
(CD 4) Sri Chinna Brahmaiah Y. S/o. Sri Yarra Shivaramaiah, Res at Flat No. 302, Shree Enclave Apartments, Nanja Reddy Colony, Kakayappa Layout, Murugeshpalya, Bengaluru, Bangalore,Karnataka - 560 075. **... Defendant(s)**

This is to notify that as per the Recovery Certificate issued in pursuance of orders passed by the Presiding Officer, DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL, BANGALORE (DRT-1) in **OA /1197/2020** an amount of **Rs.6116203/-** (Rupees Sixty One Lakhs Sixteen Thousands Two Hundred and Three Only) along cost and future interest @12.25 % p.a. Compound interest monthly w.e.f. 21.09.2020 till realization and costs of Rs.67533(Rupees Sixty Seven Thousands Five Hundred and Thirty Three Only) has become due against you (Jointly and severally/Fully/Limited).

CH Name	Int. Type/ mode	Int. Rate	Effective Date	Order Date	Amount (Rs.)	Interet (ason order date	RC Amount (Rs.)	Remark
Karnataka Bank LTd.,	Compound Interest (Monthly)	12.25	12.09.2020	30.06.2023	6116203	0	6116203	

CD Name	Loan Type	Int. Type/ mode	Int. Rate	Effective Date	Order Date	Amt. Rs	Libility Type	Interet (ason order date	RC Amt (Rs.)	Remark
1. Sri Lohith Reddy	Term Loan	Compound Interest (Monthly)	12.25	21.09.2020	30.06.2023	6116203	Jointly & severally	Int. (ason order date	6116203	
2. Sri Nakul Reddy	Term Loan	Compound Interest (Monthly)	12.25	21.09.2020	30.06.2023	6116203	Jointly & severally	Int. (ason order date	6116203	
3. Smt Jayashree V Reddy	Term Loan	Compound Interest (Monthly)	12.25	21.09.2020	30.06.2023	6116203	Jointly & severally	Int. (ason order date	6116203	
4. Smt Chinna Brahmaiah Y	Term Loan	Compound Interest (Monthly)	12.25	21.09.2020	30.06.2023	6116203	Jointly & severally	Int. (ason order date	6116203	

2. You are hereby directed to pay the above sum within 15 days of the receipts of the notice, failing which the recovery shall be made in accordance with the Recovery of Debts Due to Banks and Financial Institutions Act, 1993 and Rules there under. **3**.You are hereby ordered to declare on an affidavit the particulars of yours assets on or before the next date of hearing.**4.** You are hereby ordered to appear before the undersigned within 15 days of the receipts of the notice, for further proceedings. **5**. In addition to the sum aforesaid, you will be liable to pay: (a) Such interests as is payable for the period commencing immediately after this notice of the certificate/ execution proceedings. (b) All costs, charges and expenses incurred in respect of the service of this notice and warrants and other processess and all other proceedings taken for recovering the amount due. Given under my hand and seal of the Tribunal on **24.07.2024**

Sd/- (P H. Hemanth Kumar, IRS) Recovery Officer-2,
Debts Recovery Tribunal -1, Bangalore

Air pollution will lower India's solar generation capacity: study

Solar cells perform best under bright sunlight. They also need lower ambient temperature and airflow over them for cooling. Any imbalance in these factors lowers solar cell performance. Researchers have found that solar radiation was the main factor affecting solar-cell efficiency, followed by temperature

Unnati Ashar

A study by researchers at IIT Delhi has found that air pollution and climate change will impair solar panel performance in India. It was published in *Environmental Research Letters* in November 2024.

According to the paper, India is the fifth-largest solar power producer worldwide. The country has set a target to produce 50% of its electric power from non-fossil fuel sources by 2030, and plans to install 500 GW of renewable energy capacity to this end by then. One-fifth of this capacity is expected to be in the form of solar power.

India also has plans to develop more solar parks and promote rooftop solar generation.

Solar power and climate

Like other forms of renewable energy sources , solar photovoltaic energy is at the mercy of weather and climate.

"Accurately assessing future renewable energy resources, particularly solar energy in India, where solar deployment is expanding rapidly, is crucial for ensuring a sustainable and resilient energy future," Sushovan Ghosh, lead author of the new study, then at the Centre for Atmospheric Sciences at IIT Delhi and now a researcher in the Earth Sciences Department of the Barcelona Supercomputing Centre, said.

The study is the first to examine how climate change will affect solar cell efficiency in India.

"Studies of this kind give impetus to the innovations towards mitigating greenhouse gases through the exploration of viable energy alternatives and, more importantly, improvements in photovoltaic cell design," T.V. Ramachandra, a faculty member at the Centre for Ecological Sciences of the Indian Institute of Science, Bengaluru, said. India has 300 sunny days a year but their quality is declining due to air pollution. "Solar radiation at the earth's surface is not stable over time but undergoes significant long-term variations, referred to as global dimming and brightening," Ghosh said.

"This variation depends on atmospheric variables such as clouds, aerosols or particulate matter, water vapour, and radiatively active gas molecules such as ozone. Clouds reflect and aerosols either scatter or absorb incoming solar radiation reaching the surface. Therefore, on a cloudy or hazy day, due to particulate matter pollution, less solar radiation will impinge on the solar panel and reduce solar generation."

Workers install solar panels at the Adani Group-owned Khavda Renewable Energy Park in Khavda, Gujarat. AFP

Data from CERES

The team's study used data from 1985 to 2014 to predict changes from 2041 to 2050, the middle of the current century. "Given that photovoltaic power plants generally have a lifespan of 20 to 25 years, analysing the 2040s aligns well with the operational lifetime of existing and planned installations," according to Ghosh. "Beyond this period, the analysis may lose practical relevance."

The team used global climate models, testing them against observations from NASA's Clouds and the Earth's Radiant Energy System (CERES) project and the India Meteorological Department. CERES uses instruments in space to measure radiation coming from the earth and thus understand the role of cloud cover in climate change.

The team studied two scenarios. The first included a moderate level of efforts to control air quality and mitigate climate change. The second had weak climate change efforts but strong air pollution control measures.

Air pollution blocks solar radiation from reaching solar panels, resulting in less power produced. Rising temperatures due to climate change also lower the efficiency of solar cells.

Temperature to blame

The models found that by mid-century, the efficiency of solar panels in India will drop by 2.3% in the second scenario but by a greater amount in the first scenario. Based on current solar power generation levels, this amounts to a loss of at least 840 gigawatt-hours of electricity every year. Losses from temperature were higher in the second scenario, which was expected because of weaker climate action.

> Studies of this kind give impetus to innovations that mitigate greenhouse gas emissions through the exploration of viable energy alternatives and, more importantly, improvements in photovoltaic cell design

"This study, based on radiation data from global climate models, provides vital insights into the likely impact of escalating air pollution on photovoltaic efficiency," Ramachandra, who wasn't involved in the study, said.

Solar cells perform best under bright sunlight. They also need lower ambient temperature and airflow over them for cooling. Any imbalance in these factors lowers solar cell performance.

The study found that solar radiation was the main factor affecting solar cell efficiency. Temperature came next, followed by ambient wind speed, although it was much less impactful.

Cut emissions either way

The study also reported that the temperature of solar cells is expected to rise by 2 degrees C by the mid-century due to higher ambient temperatures. "It is important to distinguish between ambient air temperature and cell temperature, as solar cells can heat up significantly beyond the surrounding air temperature due to solar exposure," Ghosh said.

The researchers also revealed that some parts of India's northeast as well as Kerala will develop higher solar power potential in time. "This is really interesting. ... This is because the cloud fractions are expected to decrease over these regions," Ghosh said.

According to the paper, the models can help the government and industry players better pick sites for future solar power projects and allocate resources accordingly.

According to Ghosh, the study underscores the need to curb climate change and improve air quality. He advocated cutting greenhouse gas emissions in particular, which would mitigate climate change as well as remove particulate matter in the way of sunlight headed for solar panels: "This will help us fully utilise the future solar energy potential and create a path toward building climate-resilient nations."

"At the individual level, public participation is crucial, through the adoption of electric vehicles and the use of public transport to reduce fossil fuel consumption. Tree planting and climate awareness efforts to enhance environmental sustainability are needed," Ghosh added.

"While India has introduced commendable policies, the key challenge lies in accelerating their effective implementation from the ground level to top governance structures."

(Unnati Ashar is a freelance science journalist. unnati_a@ymail.com)

THE GIST

India has 300 sunny days a year, but their quality is declining due to air pollution. 'Solar radiation at the earth's surface is not stable over time but undergoes significant long-term variations, referred to as global dimming and brightening'

Air quality variations depend on clouds, aerosols, particulate matter, water vapour and radiatively active gas molecules such as ozone. On a cloudy or hazy day, due to particulate matter, less solar radiation will impinge on the panel and affect generation

The study used data from 1985 to 2014 to predict changes from 2041 to 2050. 'Given that photovoltaic power plants generally have a lifespan of 20 to 25 years, analysing the 2040s aligns well with the operational lifetime of installations'

The research concluded that by mid-century, the efficiency of solar panels will drop by 2.3% owing to pollution. Based on current solar generation levels, this amounts to a loss of at least 840 gigawatt-hours of electricity every year

BIG SHOT

River water running through the Nueva Florida neighbourhood, which risks flooding because of glacial melt, a topic at the root of a lawsuit by local farmer Saul Luciano Lliuya against German energy utility RWE, in Huaraz, Peru earlier this month. REUTERS

WHAT IS IT?

Birefringence: different in different directions

Vasudevan Mukunth

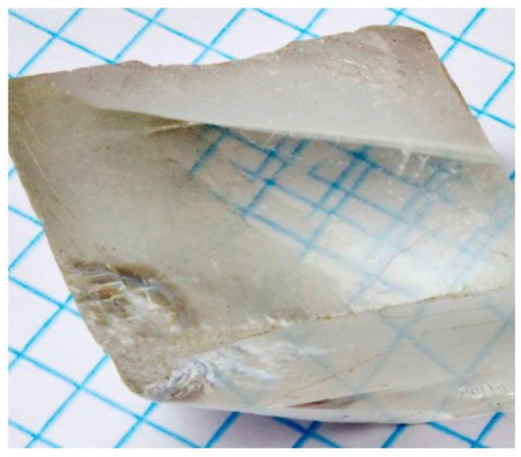
When light passes through a glass prism from air, its path bends due to a property of the glass called refraction. The amount of bending depends on the material's refractive index. It is calculated as the ratio of the speed of light in vacuum to the speed of light in the material.

For example, the refractive index of vacuum is 1, of air is 1.0003, of glass is roughly 1.5, and of diamond is 2.4.

Some materials have more than one refractive index; that is, they slow the passage of light to a different degree in two different directions. Such materials are said to be birefringent. They occur naturally as well as can be engineered in the lab. Examples of naturally birefringent materials include mica and quartz; those of synthetic ones include barium borate and lithium niobate.

Certain materials' birefringence can also be induced or modified by physically stressing them or exposing them to electric or magnetic fields. Birefringence arises because the material has different crystal structures in different directions, i.e. are anisotropic. Which ray of light is bent in which direction depends on the direction in which it is moving and how it is polarised. Light consists of an electric field oscillating perpendicular to a magnetic field, and both of them perpendicular to the light's direction of motion. Polarisation refers to the direction of the electric field.

Birefringent materials are used in LCD screens, medical microscopes, optical switches, waveplates, frequency converters, and high-power lasers. (*mukunth.v@thehindu.co.in*)



A calcite crystal placed on a single, blue grid creates images of two grids due to birefringence. APN MJM (CC BY-SA)

For feedback and suggestions for 'Science', please write to **science@thehindu.co.in** with the subject 'Daily page'

Karunya
DEEMED UNIVERSITY
SOLVING HUMAN PROBLEMS
NAAC Accredited A++

ARISE AND SHINE

Accreditation
A++ Grade
B. Com and Management Programs
Engineering and Management Programs
B.Sc. (Hons.) Agriculture Program

Global Ranking
World University Rankings 2025
1201-1500 Band

CATEGORY 1 Institution UGC GoI.

ADMISSIONS OPEN 2025

Learn At KARUNYA
Lead the WORLD...

KEE'25
(Online Karunya Entrance Exam)
For B.Tech.

KMAT'25
(Karunya Management Aptitude Test)
For MBA

SCHEDULED ON:
05th-06th
APRIL 2025

Get Upto* 100 % Scholarship

DAY SCHOLAR FACILITY
NOW AVAILABLE FOR COIMBATORE RESIDENTS

A WORLD-RANKED UNIVERSITY OFFERS WORLD-CLASS OPPORTUNITIES, CONNECTING YOU WITH 85+ COUNTRIES

Earn While You Learn:
Industry-Integrated Learning at **Karunya**

"I'm Aburaja, a 3rd-year B.Tech Data Science and Cyber Security student, working as a Software Developer at US Based Company after my classes every day. This role has allowed me to work on diverse projects, sharpen my front-end and back-end development skills, and collaborate with a dynamic team. It's been a fulfilling experience that has deepened my passion for software development."

Choose your career in:

B.Tech.
- Aerospace Engineering
- Artificial Intelligence & Data Science
- Biomedical Engineering
- Biotechnology
- Civil Engineering
- Computer Science & Engineering
- Computer Science & Engineering (Artificial Intelligence)
- Computer Science & Engineering (Artificial Intelligence & Machine Learning)
- Computer Engineering
- Electronics & Communication Engineering
- Electrical & Electronics Engineering
- Food Processing & Engineering
- Mechanical Engineering
- Robotics & Automation

M.Tech.
- Aerospace Engineering
- Biotechnology
- Biomedical Instrumentation
- Computer Science & Engineering
- Cyber Security
- Food Processing & Engineering
- Integrated Water Resources Management
- Robotics & Automation
- Structural Engineering
- VLSI Design

B.Sc.
- Forensic Science
- Information Security & Digital Forensics
- Computer Science & Media Production

B.Sc. (Hons.)
- Agriculture

M.Sc.
- Agriculture (Agronomy)
- Agriculture (Genetics & Plant Breeding)
- Horticulture (Fruit Science)
- Biotechnology
- Forensic Science
- Food Science & Technology
- Information Security & Digital Forensics
- Artificial Intelligence & Data Science

B.Com.
- (Spl. in Professional Accounting and Financial Technology)

Management
- M.B.A
- Online M.B.A

Karunya Sets a New Benchmark in Placements!
2069+ OFFERS Secured by Students!
455+ Top-Tier Companies Partnered for Recruitment!

Karunya Institute of Technology and Sciences
Karunya Nagar, Siruvani Main Road, Coimbatore - 641 114. Tamil Nadu, India
E-mail: admissions@karunya.edu • Website: www.karunya.edu
Contact: 94425 03422 / 1800 88 99 888, 1800 42 54 300

APPLY NOW!
* Condition apply

Text&Context

THE HINDU

NEWS IN NUMBERS

Number of madrasas in Azamgarh found to be non-existent

219 The police here have registered a case against 219 'madrasas' that were drawing government aid but did not exist on the ground, police said on Sunday. The investigation was prompted by discrepancies found during online data entry on the madrasa portal. PTI

Death toll in North Macedonia nightclub fire

59 A fire that tore through a nightclub in North Macedonia killed 59 revellers attending a hip-hop concert, with more than 100 wounded. The fire broke out in "Pulse", a nightclub in the eastern town of Kocani, where more than 1,000 fans had crammed in to see the hip-hop duo DNK. AFP

Number of civilians evacuated from Kursk region by Russia

371 Russia on Sunday said it has moved to safety 371 of its civilians from areas it retook from Ukrainian forces in its border Kursk region. The civilians became trapped when Ukraine launched its surprise incursion in August 2024, more than two years into Russia's offensive. AFP

Death toll from tornadoes and storms across the central U.S.

33 Eight people died in Kansas in a crash involving more than 50 vehicles, caused by low visibility during a "severe dust storm" and Missouri State Highway Patrol confirmed 12 storm-related fatalities. The police also reported downed trees and power lines, as well as damage to buildings. AFP

Number of patients rescued in a fire in Gwalior hospital

190 A fire broke out in a government hospital in Madhya Pradesh's Gwalior city early on Sunday, following which more than 190 patients were rescued from the medical facility. No casualty was reported in the incident. PTI

COMPILED BY THE HINDU DATA TEAM

Follow us facebook.com/thehindu twitter.com/the_hindu instagram.com/the_hindu

What is Elon Musk's Starlink all about?

What is Starlink, and how does it work? Why does it face regulatory hurdles in India? Why hasn't India auctioned satellite spectrum? What impact could U.S. trade pressure have on Starlink's approval? What government approvals does Starlink need?

EXPLAINER

Aroon Deep

The story so far:

Bharti Airtel and Reliance Jio have signed distribution pacts with SpaceX Corp.'s Starlink service to bring satellite internet access to India. The distribution pacts are a reversal from the telecom industry's reluctance to quickly make the Starlink service available in India without auctions for the satellite airwaves.

What is Starlink?

Starlink is a low-earth orbit constellation of over 7,000 satellites that provide internet access to users with ground terminals, which the Elon Musk-owned SpaceX is already selling in around 40 countries. The satellites constantly orbit the earth, blanketing practically its entire habitable surface with coverage, as long as a given terminal on the ground has visibility to the sky.

The service offers speeds of around 100 megabits per second, comparable with many home broadband connections. However, the "latency," or the time it takes for a given data packet to travel between a user and terrestrial internet networks, is higher than wired broadband connections in offices and homes.

Satellites work in conjunction with ground stations on earth, which are physically connected to the internet like any other network and beam up connections wirelessly to satellites above them at any given point.

In India, Starlink may not be that useful in cities and towns with good 5G connectivity or wired broadband coverage, as local speeds and reliability will far exceed what a satellite link currently offers, even with technological advancements. However, in rural and remote areas where "terrestrial" networks have not penetrated deeply, Starlink can offer decent connectivity almost instantly.

Entry delayed: In India, Starlink has faced several regulatory hurdles. REUTERS

How much does Starlink cost?

There are two costs associated with Starlink: the user terminal – essentially a router – required to access the satellite network and the monthly access fee to stay connected. At present, a residential kit in parts of the U.S. costs $149, while a portable "roaming" kit costs $349. Import duty, GST and social welfare surcharges applicable on satellite equipment may push up the hardware price by around 30%.

Without any introductory pricing on the hardware, the equipment may cost anywhere between ₹17,000 and ₹40,000, not including shipping costs from the U.S., where it is developed and manufactured.

Besides this, unlimited residential and roaming plans range from $120-$165 in the U.S. It is not a given that this price will be any lower in India, as the cost to provide Starlink service is, by nature of the technology, the same everywhere on earth. Notably, in Bhutan, where Starlink launched this year, it is priced at 4,200 to 8,400 ngultrum, which may be an indication of the Indian price as well. The Bhutanese currency is pegged to the rupee at parity.

A higher-priced plan for users on the move, called "mobile priority" is available at 21,000 ngultrum (or therefore rupees) per month and offers priority access in case of network congestion.

When will Starlink be available in India?

Starlink has faced several regulatory hurdles, the sharpest among them being the Indian government's heavy scrutiny of internet services in general and a technology that could provide access anywhere in the country in particular.

SpaceX needs to obtain a Global Mobile Personal Communications by Satellite (GMPCS) authorisation under the Telecommunications Act, 2023. While this authorisation existed in a different form under the Telegraph Act, 1885, the updated rules under the new Act have yet to be published, and it is unclear if the government will issue such an authorisation under the previous law's subordinate legislation, even though it remains technically in force.

As a part of this authorisation, SpaceX had to convince the Indian government to accept its contentions on revealing corporate ownership data, something it resisted on investor privacy grounds abroad. While reports suggest that this particular hurdle has been passed, the company still needs to obtain a security clearance from the Ministry of Home Affairs. It remains unclear if such a clearance has been obtained.

It is also uncertain whether the company's ground stations in India – where the Telecom Act requires tapping equipment installed onsite to give law enforcement authorities access to the network, a requirement that exists for other internet networks as well – are currently operational.

Finally, Starlink also needs to be allotted wireless spectrum through which it can offer its services. The government has indicated that like other countries, it will not auction this spectrum, as these are narrow beams that can be shared with other providers, unlike the signals emitted by telecom towers on the ground. Telcos have – before tying up with Starlink this year – demanded that this spectrum be auctioned, something that would be a global first. Reliance Jio has commissioned legal opinions that state that auction is the only way to allot satellite spectrum, due to the Supreme Court's 2012 judgment in the 2G scam case, where the top court held that all scarce natural resources must be allocated by auction.

It is unclear if these hurdles will be cleared on time. However, Mr. Musk's ascendancy in the U.S. government, along with trade pressure from President Donald Trump's administration, has boosted speculation that the government may facilitate Starlink's entry in short order.

Aside from Airtel and Jio's commercial distribution agreements, there have not been any official announcements on forward movement from a regulatory point of view.

THE GIST

- Starlink needs GMPCS authorisation, security clearance, and spectrum allocation, but government scrutiny and legal challenges have delayed its approval in India.
- It is more useful in rural areas than in cities with strong 5G and broadband.
- Airtel and Jio have signed distribution agreements with Starlink, despite earlier demands for a spectrum auction. Government decisions on spectrum allocation and U.S. trade pressure may influence Starlink's entry.

Is Syria heading toward peace or more chaos?

Can the interim government rebuild Syria's economy?

Franciszek Snarski

The story so far:

Syria has entered a three-month period of political and military uncertainty following the fall of Bashar al-Assad's regime in December 2024. Interim President Ahmed al-Sharaa is seeking international legitimacy while navigating internal instability. His government has reached a significant agreement with the U.S.-backed Kurdish Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), integrating their military and administrative structures into the Syrian state. However, conflict persists, with Israel expanding control in the Golan Heights under the pretext of counterterrorism. The country's economy remains crippled by Assad-era sanctions, hindering reconstruction efforts.

Who leads the Syrian government?

Since the overthrow of Mr. Assad's regime, power has transitioned to an interim government led by Mr. al-Sharaa, leader of Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham (HTS).

Despite its militant origins, HTS has rebranded itself as a governing authority, pledging to respect minority rights. However, the new administration lacks full territorial control. Mr. Assad's loyalists continue to operate in the coastal region of Latakia, while the SDF operate in the northeastern semi-independent Rojava region.

What is the current state of conflict?

Although the Syrian Arab Army (SAA) largely disintegrated after Mr. Assad's departure, loyalist cells continue resisting, particularly in Latakia, an Alawite stronghold. The situation is complicated by ongoing hostilities in the northeast, where the Turkish-backed Syrian National Army (SNA) continues shelling SDF positions as part of Ankara's broader strategy to curb Kurdish influence. Israel has intensified military operations, launching over 400 airstrikes in December 2024, targeting military facilities, airports, warships and infrastructure. The Israel Defense Forces (IDF) subsequently advanced beyond the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF) buffer zone in the Golan Heights. The invasion of the UNDOF zone,has been condemned by the UN as a violation of international law. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu justified the operation as a preventive measure against "terrorist threats" and demanded that the new Syrian government demilitarise the region south of Damascus.

What about reports of Alawite massacres?

Sectarian violence has escalated in Latakia since December, with reports of massacres against the Alawite community. The U.K.-based Syrian Human Rights Observatory reported that 1,383 civilians have been killed by government-allied groups and Mr. Assad's loyalists.

The international community has raised concerns over potential revenge killings, given HTS's historically Sunni Islamist ideology. Critics argue that many government security officers remain HTS loyalists, fuelling suspicions of targeted reprisals. However, Mr. al-Sharaa has denied any state involvement, attributing the start to the unrest to misinformation campaigns allegedly linked to Russia and Iran.

Why is Syria at risk of further violence?

Syria remains one of the poorest states in the world, with over 90% of the population living under the poverty line. Combined with the factor of hundreds of thousands of combatants, whose previous political-military structures have disintegrated, wandering around the country without employment or security, the region remains ripe for new waves of violence. These issues could be alleviated, if Assad-era international sanctions on Syria's economy were lifted, nevertheless, they remain in place, as foreign leaders remain cautious of the new government. Mr. al-Sharaa has called for the reconsideration of sanction regime, with the first steps being taken by the U.K. and Canada, easing the trade restrictions on key petroleum companies and Syrian Central Bank.

Ultimately, Syria's future hinges on the drafting and enforcement of a new constitution that guarantees minority rights and national sovereignty. Whether the interim government can consolidate power, gain international recognition, rebuild the economy and prevent further fragmentation remains uncertain, but the coming months will be critical in determining Syria's path forward.

Franciszek Snarski is currently interning for The Hindu

THE GIST

- After Assad's fall in December 2024, interim leader Ahmed al-Sharaa struggles to consolidate control, with loyalist resistance, Kurdish integration, and ongoing regional conflicts shaping Syria's fragile stability.
- Fighting continues in key areas like Latakia, while Israeli military actions and Turkish-backed offensives add to instability; meanwhile, international sanctions and economic collapse hinder Syria's reconstruction efforts.

Bank employee, friend held for manhandling on-duty woman police officer

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The Mahadevapura police arrested a private bank employee and his female friend for allegedly assaulting a woman police officer on duty over a trivial row during a drunk driving check in K.R. Puram on Saturday night.

The accused Rakesh Kumar was on a bike ride with his friend from Ramamurthy Nagar when the police stopped them for a check. The police found that the rider was under the influence of alcohol, seized the bike and issued them a notice to come to the station the next day. Despite repeated requests, the accused did not move and started arguing with the woman police Sub-Inspector.

The argument got out of control and the accused reportedly manhandled PSI Anitha Kumari prompting her to report the matter to her seniors. The Mahadevapura police rushed to the spot and arrested Rakesh Kumar and his friend on the charge of assaulting a government servant on duty for further investigation.

Cancel wills, property transfers in cases of elderly parents being abandoned in hospitals: Minister

Recent reports suggested that over 150 senior citizens had met that fate at Belagavi Institute of Medical Sciences alone

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Sharan Prakash Patil

In the light of a rise in instances of children abandoning their elderly parents after taking claim over their properties, Medical Education Minister Sharan Prakash Patil has asked Revenue Department officials to cancel wills or property transfers to prevent ill treatment of senior citizens and sought action against those responsible under the Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act, 2007.

His suggestion came after reports emerged of more than 150 senior citizens being deserted in Belagavi Institute of Medical Sciences (BIMS) alone, and over 100 similar cases being reported in medical institutions elsewhere in the State.

The problem had become so acute that BIMS had to find a suitable retirement homes for about 70 senior citizens, while the rest are still in the hospital.

The matter had also been raised in the Legislative Council where members pointed out that the senior citizens are brought to the hospital on pretext of health issues and children then abandon them there.

The BIMS director flagged the distressing situation in the hospital at a review meeting with the Minister here recently. Following this, the Minister asked the Director of Medical Education to alert all institute heads and lodge complaints with assistant commissioners (Revenue Sub-Division) to act against the children responsible under the Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act, 2007.

Economic hardship

A note from his office said that many abandoned parents have stated that their children deserted them in hospitals, knowing well that they would receive food, clothing and shelter. While some cited economic hardships, in most cases senior citizens were abandoned after their children transferred their properties to themselves, it said.

Dr. Patil has asked medical institute directors to file complaints, and said, "Many people are unaware of this law. It mandates that children or relatives must provide financial and medical support to senior citizens. If they fail to do so, parents have the legal right to cancel property transfer made in favour of their children."

He pointed out that Section 23 of the Act allowed cancellation of wills or property transfers, restoring ownership to the elderly parents if children neglect or abandon them after inheriting property. With increasing reports of such cases, the government is stepping in to ensure justice for abandoned senior citizens and hold their children accountable, the note added.

Hike in food allowance for police on special duty

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The hike will help mitigate the price rise of food items, which had a cascading effect on the beneficiaries. FILE PHOTO

To ensure quality food to police personnel on special duty, Chief Minister Siddaramaiah announced that the food allowance provided to police officers and personnel on bandobast duty will be increased to ₹300 from ₹200.

The State Home Department had earlier moved a proposal to hike food allowance. This would not only help solve the issue of quality food but mitigate the price rise of food items, which had a cascading effect on the beneficiaries. "We had submitted the proposal in January this year," a senior official told *The Hindu*. It has been a challenge for the unit head to provide food for police personnel deployed on special duty, including festive seasons, elections and special events.

On February 10, during the Aero India show, the Yelahanka police had registered an FIR against a private caterer for supplying sub-standard food to police deployed for the event. They complained of finding insects in the food packets and stopped eating it. On two earlier occasions, police personnel had complained that a cockroach and other insects were found in food packets. They alleged that the caterer did not follow cleanliness guidelines and used sub-standard material.

Senior police officials at Aero India had breakfast with security personnel to check the quality. Later, they arranged food from a hotel and ate with police personnel to ensure quality and boost morale.

More than supplying food, it's always a problem to apply for reimbursement of food bills, another officer rued. The department, as per the rules, require GST bills with TIN numbers, which is difficult to get, and they have to be submitted to the Khajane portal. Payment of bills either gets delayed or rejected on technical grounds. Especially in remote areas, food is sourced from external vendors, with payments made directly to them. Officials, who have contacts with hotels and local caterers, get the food. Vendors often provide food on credit, as bill payments from the department take months.

In majority of the cases, officials pay the money from their pockets to suppliers, and do not claim reimbursement. This is leading to another level of corruption as the officials given the task of supplying food need to arrange the money somehow, sources said.

State govt. issues show-cause notice to BMCRI emergency medical officer for assaulting in-laws

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

An outside view of Victoria Hospital in Bengaluru. FILE PHOTO

A doctor from Victoria Hospital has been issued a show-cause notice by the Medical Education Department for allegedly assaulting her elderly in-laws and harassing them along with her children.

Following the direction from Mohammad Mohsin, Principal Secretary, Medical Education Department, Priyadarshini from Victoria Hospital has been asked to submit a written explanation regarding the incident, failing which further disciplinary action will be taken.

A video of Dr. Priyadarshini, an emergency medical officer at Bangalore Medical College and Research Institute (BMCRI), allegedly assaulting her elderly in-laws along with her children, recently went viral.

Reports indicate that she has been harassing them for the past ten years. She has filed for divorce but allegedly went to her in-laws' residence and physically attacked them. A case has been registered at a city police station in connection with this incident.

Taking the matter seriously, Mohammad Mohsin stated that such behavior brings embarrassment to the department. He immediately directed Sujatha Rathod, Director of Medical Education (DME), to issue a show-cause notice to Dr. Priyadarshini.

Mohammed Moshin had previously brought to the attention of Medical Education Minister Sharan Prakash Patil the cases of elderly parents being abandoned at hospitals, often after transferring their assets to others. He had also made recommendations for legal action in such cases.

Timings
BENGALURU

MONDAY, MAR. 17	
RISE 06:26	SET 18:30
RISE 20:55	SET 08:05
TUESDAY, MAR. 18	
RISE 06:25	SET 18:30
RISE 21:44	SET 08:42
WEDNESDAY, MAR. 19	
RISE 06:24	SET 18:30
RISE 22:34	SET 09:23

Bengaluru Weather	max	min
Tumakuru	34	23
Mysuru	34	20
Bengaluru	35	19

Bengaluru Today
35°C Morning will be pleasant. Day will be warm with uneasy afternoon. Night also will be pleasant. Dry weather to prevail.

Bengaluru Tomorrow
34°C The weather will be dry. Day will be warm. Night will be pleasant.

© Copyright Skymet Weather 2025
All rights reserved.

THE HINDU
DISCLAIMER: Readers are requested to verify and make appropriate enquiries to satisfy themselves about the veracity of an advertisement before responding to any published in this newspaper. THG PUBLISHING PVT LTD., the Publisher & Owner of this newspaper, does not vouch for the authenticity of any advertisement or advertiser or for any of the advertiser's products and/or services. In no event can the Owner, Publisher, Printer, Editor, Director/s, Employees of this newspaper/company be held responsible/liable in any manner whatsoever for any claims and/or damages for advertisements in this newspaper.

KARNATAKA GOVERNMENT STOCK (SECURITIES)
Vidhana Soudha, Bengaluru

No: FD 01 BMB 2024 Dated: 15.03.2025

NOTICE

1. Aggregate Amount : Total Rs.7000 crore (Re-issues:Rs.2000 crore+ Re-issues Rs.2000 crore + Re-issues Rs.2000 crore + Re-issues Rs.1000 crore)
2. Method of Issue : By auction, through PDO, RBI, Mumbai (Fort)
3. Date of auction : March 18, 2025

Government of Karnataka invites subscription to the above securities. Copies of the Notification and Application forms may be obtained from PDO, RBI, Bangalore. Non-competitive bidding facility has been introduced by RBI to encourage participation of retail investors. The Government stock up to 10% of the notified amount of the sale will be allotted to eligible individuals and institutions. Sample Tender Forms and the revised scheme of Non-competitive bidding facility is available on the website **www.rbi.org.in.**

Sd/- (Dr. P.C Jaffer)
Secretary to Government
(Budget & Resources), Finance Department

DIPR/CP/5728/Zen/2024-25

GOVERNMENT OF KARNATAKA
RURAL DRINKING WATER & SANITATION DEPARTMENT
Office of The Executive Engineer, R.D.W & S, Division, Haveri

Sl.No.:RDW&SD/Haveri/PB-1/Tender:12/2024-25/2705 Date:14-3-2025

SHORT TERM TENDER NOTIFICATION

1) Last Date for Tender queries / clarifications : : 19-3-2025 at 11:00 hours
2) Request of Blank Tender Documents and Receipt of completed Technical & Financial Bid through e-procurement from : 24-3-2025 at 17:00 hours
3) Date of Technical Bid Opening (If possible) : 25-3-2025 @ 17:00 hours
4) Date of Financial Bid Opening (If Possible) : 26-3-2025 @ 10:00 hours

Inviting tenders of FSTP of Byadagi Taluk under SBM(G) Scheme

Indent No.: (1) Construction of 3 KLD Faecal Sludge Treatment Plant (FSTP) at Gundenagalli Gram Panchayath in Byadagi Taluka of Haveri Dist. (RWSSD/2024-25/WT/WORK_INDENT9157)

The blank tender documents can be downloaded through website **https://kpp.karnataka.gov.in** from the date of hosting the tender.

Sd/- Executive Engineer
R.D.W&S Division, Haveri

CENTRAL ELECTRICITY REGULATORY COMMISSION
6th, 7th, & 8th Floor, Tower-B, World Trade Centre, Nauroji Nagar, New Delhi-110029
Tel: 2618 9709
केंद्रीय विद्युत नियामक आयोग CERC
सत्यमेव जयते

Petition No. 507/TL/2024 Dated: 12.3.2025

NOTICE UNDER CLAUSE (a) OF SUB-SECTION (5) OF SECTION 15 OF THE ELECTRICITY ACT, 2003

An application under Sections 14 and 15 of the Electricity Act, 2003 (the Act) has been made by **POWERGRID Khavda PS1 and 3 Transmission Limited**, B-9, Qutab Institutional Area, Katwaria Sarai, New Delhi-110016 to establish the Inter-state transmission system for the "Provision of Dynamic Reactive Compensation at Khavda Pooling Station 1 (KPS1) and Khavda Pooling Station 3 (KPS3)" on a Build, Own, Operate and Transfer basis (hereinafter referred to as the 'transmission scheme/project'). The scope of the project for which a transmission licence has been sought is as follows:

S. No.	Nameof the Transmission Element	Scheduled COD in months from Effective Date	Percentage of Quoted Transmission Charges recoverable on Scheduled COD of the Element of the Project	Element(s) which are pre-required for declaring the commercial operation (COD) of the respective Element
1.	± 300 MVAR STATCOM with 1x125 MVAR MSC, 2x125 MVAR MSR at KPS1, 400 kV Bus section-1 with 1 No. of 400 kV bay (GIS) • ± 300 MVAR STATCOM with 1x125 MVAR MSC, 2x125 MVAR MSR • 400 kV bay (GIS) – 1 No. (KPS1 Bus Section-1)	24 months from the SPV acquisition	33.334%	-
2.	± 300 MVAR STATCOM with 1x125 MVAR MSC, 2x125 MVAR MSR at KPS1, 400 kV Bus section-2 with 1 No. of 400 kV bay (GIS) • ± 300 MVAR STATCOM with 1x125 MVAR MSC, 2x125 MVAR MSR • 400 kV bay (GIS) – 1 No. (KPS1 Bus Section-2)		33.333%	-
3.	± 300 MVAR STATCOM with 1x125 MVAR MSC, 2x125 MVAR MSR at KPS3 400 kV Bus section-1 with 1 No. of 400 kV bay (GIS) • ± 300 MVAR STATCOM with 1x125 MVAR MSC, 2x125 MVAR MSR • 400kV bay (GIS) – 1 No. (KPS3 Bus Section-1)		33.333%	-

Note:
i) TSPs of KPS1 and KPS3 shall provide space for one (1) 400 kV bay (each) for termination of STATCOM.
ii) Land for installation of STATCOM (with MSC/MSR) as specified above shall be arranged by TSP implementing the STATCOM.
iii) Bay(s) required for completion of diameter (GIS) in a one-and-half breaker scheme, shall also be executed by the TSP under the present scope.
2. The Central Transmission Utility of India Limited, vide its letter dated 3.1.2025, has recommended for the grant of a transmission licence to the applicant to establish the proposed transmission system.
3. Based on the material available on the record, the Commission vide order dated 12.3.2025 in Petition No. 507/TL/2024, has proposed to issue a transmission licence to the applicant for establishment of the transmission scheme as noted in para 1 above.
4. A copy of the application, along with its annexures and enclosures, made by the applicant for the grant of an inter-State transmission licence to **POWERGRID Khavda PS1 and 3 Transmission Limited** before the Commission can be accessed at the **www.powergrid.in/subsidiaries** or inspected by any person in the Commission's office by following the laid down procedure.
5. Notice is hereby given in pursuance of clause (a) of sub-section (5) of Section 15 of the Act that suggestions or objections, if any, to the Commission's proposal to grant a transmission licence to the applicant, as aforesaid, be sent to the undersigned by **24.3.2025** at the above noted address. The suggestions or objections received after the specified date shall not be considered.
6. The application shall be taken up for the further hearing by the Commission on **25.3.2025**. Any person who files suggestions or objections may in his/her discretion attend the hearing, for which no TA/DA shall be paid by the Commission.

Sd/-
(Harpreet Singh Pruthi)
Secretary

BANGALORE WATER SUPPLY AND SEWERAGE BOARD
INVITATION FOR TENDER
(only through KPP Portal)
BWSSB invites Tenders from Registered Contractors for the following works.

Office of the Chief Engineer (West), 6th Floor, Cauvery Bhavan, K.G. Road, Bengaluru - 560009

Sl No.	Division	IFT Number	Amount put to Tender / EMD Amount	Last date & time for Submission of Tender	Date & time for Opening of Tender
1.	North West-2	BWSSB/EENW-2/TO/PB/5075/2024-25 Dated: 07.03.2025 (3rd Call)	₹ 69,98,958/- / ₹ 1,40,000/-	24.03.2025 upto 4:00 pm	25.03.2025 after 4:30 pm
			Sd/- Executive Engineer (North West-2)		
2.	North West-1	BWSSB/EE(NW-1)/PB/6178/2024-25 Dated: 14.03.2025 (5th Call)	₹ 54,33,410/- / ₹ 1,09,000/-	24.03.2025 upto 5:00 pm	25.03.2025 after 5:15 pm
			Sd/- Executive Engineer (North West-1)		
Office of the Chief Engineer (South), 7th Floor, Cauvery Bhavan, K.G. Road, Bengaluru - 560009					
3.	South West-2	BWSSB/EESW-2/TO/PB/5200/2024-25 Dated: 14.03.2025 (3rd Call)	₹ 41,87,808/- / ₹ 83,800/-	24.03.2025 upto 5:00 pm	26.03.2025 after 10:30 am
4.			₹ 91,51,911/- / ₹ 1,83,100/-		
			Sd/- Executive Engineer (South West-2)		
5.	South West-1	BWSSB/EESW-1/TO/PB/5923/2024-25 Dated: 15.03.2025	₹ 76,79,619/- / ₹ 1,53,600/-	26.03.2025 upto 4:00 pm	28.03.2025 after 3:00 pm
			Sd/- Executive Engineer (South West-1)		
Office of the Chief Engineer (Design & QA), 9th Floor, Cauvery Bhavan, K.G. Road, Bengaluru - 560009					
6.	DE & PS	BWSSB/EDEPSTE/AE/1527/2024-25 Dated: 10.03.2025 (2nd Call)	₹ 78,57,619/- / ₹ 1,57,152/-	25.03.2025 upto 11:00 am	26.03.2025 after 11:15 am
7.		BWSSB/EDEPSTE/AE/1528/2024-25Dated: 10.03.2025 (2nd Call)	₹ 32,09,689/- / ₹ 64,200/-		
			Sd/- Executive Engineer (DE&PS)		

The detail regarding the tender & participation in the e-procurement portal process can be obtained by logging on to **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in** For further details contact the above signed office during working hours.

DIPR/SI/5686/2024-25

KMF Karnataka Co-Operative Milk Producers' Federation Limited
KMF Complex: Dr. M. H. Marigowda Road, DRC Post, Bangalore-560 029.
Tel: 080-25536625 / 25536789 Fax: 080-25536105

IFT No: KMF/ENGG/ CFPR-Capacitor bank/1955/2024-25 Date: 14-03-2025

TENDER NOTIFICATION
[TWO COVER SYSTEM] [THROUGH KPP PORTAL ONLY]

Karnataka Milk Federation Ltd; Bangalore invites tender from the eligible suppliers / manufacturers through KPP Portal for the works mentioned in the table below. The interested and reputed suppliers / manufacturers who have handled similar kind of works may participate in the tender as indicated below, by logging on to website https://www.kppp.karnataka.gov.in and also contact Help desk E-mail; hphelpdesk.blr@intarvo.com and helpline no. 080-25501227/ 25501216.

Sl. No.	Name of the work	Qty.	EMD in Rs.	Period of Completion
1	Supply & Installation of 400KVAR Capacitor bank and related Extention, Revamping, Retrofitment works to Cattle Feed Plant, Rajanukunte.	1 Job	50,000/-	3 months

1. Tender schedules may be downloaded from dated: 17-03-2025 to 02-04-2025 up to 4.00 pm.
2. Last date for Tender submission on date: 02-04-2025 up to 4.00 pm
3. Tender [Part 1] to be opened on date: 03-04-2025 at 4:30 pm.

For Karnataka Milk Federation Limited
Sd/- Director [Engineering-2]

Published by Nirmala Lakshman at No 19&21, Bhagwan Mahaveer Road, Bengaluru-560001 and Printed by C. Sridhar at Plot No. 13-D, Bommasandra-Jigani Link Road, KIADB Industrial Area, Bommasandra, Anekal Taluk, Bengaluru-560099 on behalf of THG PUBLISHING PVT LTD., Chennai-600002. Editor: Suresh Nambath (Responsible for selection of news under the PRP Act).
ISSN 0971 - 751X

KEYWORD

Thulasi Kakkat

The Three Ambedkars: force, energy, and pragmatism in action

Ambedkar's philosophy was influenced by John Dewey's pragmatism, emphasising individual moral agency and the fight against caste oppression; through reflexive morality, reconstructive rhetoric, navayana Buddhism, he redefined social justice, using strategic discourse and pragmatic thought

Nikhil Sanjay-Rekha Adsule

Last December, on the serene campus of Columbia University, one friend asked me to describe Dr. B. R. Ambedkar in two words. I immediately responded – force and energy. These two secular terms summate the principled and organic idea of Ambedkar. Looking at it as a verb removes the zeal to barricade him into a sectarian idea. My thinking-doing Ambedkar is derived from these two enlightened ideas. This is what Dr. Ambedkar, as a noun, expected from his followers. So, it becomes essential to dissect these – force and energy.

For two years now, I have been reading Professor John Dewey's texts as a scholar interested in understanding the shades of pragmatism, its critique(s) and its impact on the constitution of the verb – Ambedkar. In light of this, I believe Prof. Scott R. Stroud's recent work '*The Evolution of Pragmatism in India: Ambedkar, Dewey, and the Rhetoric of Reconstruction*' is essential for understanding the dialectics of the philosophy of pragmatism and Ambedkar. It is a necessary addition to the scholarship on Ambedkar, an attempt to infuse fresh thinking into understanding his philosophy and politics.

Triratna of pragmatism

It is a fact that Prof. Dewey was one of the teachers of young Bhimrao at Columbia University. Also, there are various copies of Professor Dewey's works and their updated editions in Dr. Ambedkar's collection. Dr Ambedkar also marked these copies, showing his protracted engagement with Prof. Dewey's ideas and those of other thinkers of his time. So, it becomes crucial to understand the intellectual interplay between Dr. Ambedkar and Prof. Dewey's ideas of pragmatism.

My reading in delineating the hermeneutics of force and energy shall foreground the concept of the Three Ambedkars to understand these complex engagements in a simple framework. These Three Ambedkars embody the principles of pragmatic philosophy that Dr. Ambedkar often used as part of his strategic approach.

Reflexive moral

Dr. Ambedkar owned a copy of Prof. John Dewey's classic, *A Theory of Ethics*, doing multiple readings. His underlining of the text with different coloured pencils shows his constant engagement with it. The text says that moral laws are the principles on which actions are based. Any moral judgement is made by duly weighing the consequences of the actions a person or an individual could take. This underscores an individual's self-agency in exercising their choices.

In his classic treatise, *Annihilation of Caste*, Dr. Ambedkar, inspired by Deweyan pragmatism, highlights the *modus operandi* of the caste system. He stresses that it is the individual agency that caste inhibits, ultimately denying a person their freedom. This divinely sanctioned, dogmatic, and systemic caste takes away individuality in thought and action. Reflexive morality, which gives the discretion of choice, the edifice on which the idea of freedom is based, is denied to a person. The person is crushed under the burden of hegemonic customary laws that are motivated by parochial dogmas, energised by the motivation – maintaining a stagnant, graded, unequal caste system. A holy system wherein birth decides the worth by the caste into which they are born.

Reconstructive rhetorical

In communication studies, the term rhetoric means persuasive communication using the instruments of text, speech, images, and other mediums. Dr. Ambedkar uses this technique inspired by Deweyan pragmatism to reconstruct a gender-biased and casteist society. Knowing the limitations, he employs them selectively in his writings, speeches, and actions. The two examples illustrate this: the battle of Bhima Koregaon, and his brilliant lecture 'Ranade, Gandhi and Jinnah', delivered in 1943 at the Gokhale Memorial Hall.

Dr. Ambedkar transformed the 1818 Battle of Bhima Koregaon – which marked the decline of Brahminical Peshwa rule – into a symbol of poetic justice. He visited the memorial in 1927. The untouchables on whom the Peshwas vigorously imposed the unjust caste system were defeated by the untouchables. Dr. Ambedkar initiated a new discourse for the untouchables, which imbibed them with the martial spirit of self-worth and strength. He was a persuasive rhetor and mentioned this battle again at the Round Table Conference in London in 1930. Many scholars may accuse it of fallibilism, but it is one of the crucial techniques that reconstructive rhetorics employ to achieve their pragmatic end.

In the second case, delivering his address in Pune, he employs the Buddhist technique of democratic deliberation, foregrounding a unique dialectical play of truth and opinion. The many references and citations, especially those of Jyotirao Phule and Thomas Carlyle, show his repertoire of pragmatism – psychological and intellectual rigour and its effective deployment to meet the desired end.

Navayana pragmatist Ambedkar

One of Dr. Ambedkar's most critical applications of pragmatism was his reconstruction of Buddha. There are many claims, and they have been accepted too, that Dr. Ambedkar was introduced to Buddhism by Keluskar Guruji very early. But, Keluskar's writings presented Buddha as a theological and divine figure. However, Dr. Ambedkar's quest for conversion and search for a religion that balances the principles of liberty, equality, and fraternity started after his famous Yeola speech of 1936, where he announced that he would quit the Hindu religion.

A key example of his pragmatic approach to reconstructing Buddha is found in his posthumously published work, '*The Buddha and His Dhamma*'. Siddhartha Gautama leaves his princely abode to avert the *vitikkamma* (state of war) between Shakyas and Koliyas due to a dispute arising from the sharing of waters of river Rohini and not for the search of enlightenment as presented in theological versions. Many such pragmatism-inspired instances twist the banal theological discourses. Thus, Dr. Ambedkar employs various tools of pragmatism to foreground his principled, organic navayana Buddhism to annihilate the gender, caste, religion and class structural inequalities.

In the above discussion, I am not proposing the singularity of pragmatism or Prof. Dewey to analyse Dr. Ambedkar. This force-energy is a constitution of multi-varied entities, chiefly from the reservoir of Buddha, Kabir, and Phule. However, one cannot neglect other influences on him – the theories, scholars, his contemporaries and spatialities, while mainly grappling with the issues of politics and economics in the contemporary realm of gender and caste, succinctly put by the late Prof. Sharmila Rege, ideas on class and left delineated by late Prof. Gail Omvedt, V. Geetha and others. It would be better to read Dr. Ambedkar and the influence of Prof. Dewey's Pragmatism on him as an intellectual exercise that helped him craft his response to the pressing issues of humanity to reclaim the lost ideals of *Manuski*, which assume more importance today.

Nikhil Sanjay-Rekha Adsule is a Senior Research Scholar, IIT-Delhi

KNOW YOUR ENGLISH

Your friend must be a foodie

The manager didn't hesitate to invite all of us to his daughter's wedding reception

S. Upendran

"Hey, it's good to see you! You look tired. Where's your friend? Has he left?"

"Yes, he left yesterday. It was pretty hectic, the week he was here."

"I can imagine! Showing people the local sights can be tiring."

"The good thing about him was that he wasn't really interested in seeing the city. The only thing he was interested in was eating - he wanted to sample the local food."

"Really? That's interesting. Your friend must be a foodie, then. He's probably..."

"Doesn't it mean someone who loves food?"

"Very good! A foodie is someone who loves his food - especially, good food. He's someone who loves to sample different types of food."

"In other words, he loves to experiment"

"Exactly! Our friend Sarita, for example, claims to be a foodie."

"The foodies in my college are very unhappy with the hostel menu."

"Another term that is sometimes used to refer to such a person is 'foodophile'. My friend is such a foodophile that before visiting a new city, he spends a lot of time on the net finding out the things he needs to eat while he's there."

"Foodies are generally welcomed with open arms in most restaurants."

"So, tell me about your foodie friend. What did he think of your favourite Udipi restaurant?"

"I think he would have killed me if I had taken him there. He likes to eat a lot of meat, and he has to have it at every meal."

"I see! Your friend must be a confirmed meatatarian."

"A meatatarian? Does it mean someone who eats a lot of meat?"

"Exactly! The word is a combination of 'meat' and 'vegetarian'. A meatatarian is someone who mostly has meat at every meal."

"So, is he someone who avoids vegetables as much as possible?"

"You could say that! I'm told that you have to be fairly well to do if you wish to be a meatatarian in our country."

"That's true! I don't have too many friends who are meatatarians."

"By the way, the word is not listed in most standard dictionaries. So, tell me, what are your plans for the summer?"

"Toying with the idea of going to Kashmir. The meatatarian's sister is getting married in May. So, he's invited me for the wedding."

"Invited you to the wedding."

"What?"

"When someone requests you to be present for an event, they are inviting you 'to' and not 'for' the event. For example, we were nearly fifty people in the department, but the Manager didn't hesitate to invite all of us to his daughter's wedding reception."

"How about this example? Sharanya was disappointed that she wasn't invited to the party."

"Sounds great! The school has invited all parents to attend the Annual Sports Day event."

"So, is it wrong to say 'invite for'?"

"We can say 'invite for'. But we'll talk about it later. Let's save it for a rainy day."

"With the kind of weather we've been having, a rainy day sounds just great!"

upendrankye@gmail.com

Word of the day

Cogent:
powerfully persuasive

Synonyms: convincing, compelling, forceful

Usage: *Her explanation was cogent, making it easy for everyone to understand.*

Pronunciation: newsth.live/cogentpro

International Phonetic Alphabet: /kəʊʤənt/

For feedback and suggestions for Text & Context, please write to **letters@thehindu.co.in** with the subject 'Text & Context'

THE DAILY QUIZ

Please send in your answers to dailyquiz@thehindu.co.in

Last week marked the 12th anniversary of the election of Pope Francis. A quiz on papacy:

Radhika Santhanam

QUESTION 1
The day after Pope Francis was elected, the Daily Mirror gave a headline which was a clever play on one of the most famous goals in the history of football. Name the player who scored that goal, who has a suite named after him in Kerala.

QUESTION 2
What is the colour of the smoke that emerges from the Sistine Chapel once a Pope is elected?

QUESTION 3
The papal conclave is the oldest historical method of electing a particular head of state. Which state are we referring to?

QUESTION 4
In this town situated at a hilltop, hundreds of people have gathered at the tomb of a saint over the last few weeks to pray for Pope Francis. Who is the saint and what is the name of the town?

QUESTION 5
A majority of Popes come from ___. Fill in the name of the country.

Visual Question:
What does this painting depict and who painted this?

Questions and Answers to the previous day's daily quiz: 1. In which Asian Capital city was the third edition of the World Cup held and how many teams took part? **Ans: Kuala Lumpur and 12 teams**
2. What was India's performance in the first two World Cups held in Spain and the Netherlands? **Ans: It had finished third in 1971 and was runner-up to Pakistan in 1973**
3. Which were the lone South American and African teams in India's group in the league stages? **Ans: Argentina and Ghana**
4. Who were the skipper and coach of the triumphant Indian squad? **Ans: Ajit Pal Singh and Gurcharan Singh Bodhi**
5. India topped its pool and played host Malaysia in the semifinals. It was four minutes away from a 2-1 defeat when this Olympic medalist equalised before India won in extra time. **Ans: Aslam Sher Khan**
6. Who netted the match-winner and name his legendary father. **Ans: Ashok Kumar, the son of Dhyan Chand**
Visual: On the left is a legendary Olympian, and on the right the then president of the Indian hockey federation. **Ans: Balbir Singh Sr. and M.A.M. Ramaswamy**
Early Birds: Tom Alan Faith| Sumana Dutta| Tito Shiladitya

Transport unions urge State govt. to revise prices of tracking devices

Price of a VLTD is set at ₹5,424 and of each panic button at ₹325; the annual network connectivity, maintenance fee is ₹1,800

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Following complaints from yellow board vehicle owners about excessive pricing by authorised vendors for Vehicle Location Tracking Devices (VLTDs) and emergency panic buttons, the Transport Department has standardised the costs. The department has set the price of a VLTD at ₹5,424, each panic button at ₹325, and the annual network connectivity and maintenance fee at ₹1,800.

However, unions representing cab, bus, and truck operators have urged the government to reassess the pricing structure. They argue that the steep costs, coupled with a lack of awareness, have made it challenging for many vehicle owners to comply with the mandate. In December 2023, the State government introduced a directive requiring all public transport and national permit vehicles to install VLTDs and panic buttons to enhance passenger safety.

Unions argue that the steep costs, coupled with a lack of awareness, have made it challenging for many vehicle owners to comply with the mandate. FILE PHOTO

In response, transport unions challenged the mandate in court, and the case is currently ongoing. Meanwhile, sources in the Transport Department have confirmed that pricing for the equipment has been set. The number of panic buttons required varies based on vehicle capacity, with a five-seater motor cab needing at least three buttons and a passenger bus which requires seven, according to a department official source.

The regulation also mandates that operators procure these devices exclusively from one of 13 government-approved vendors. Previously, these vendors were offering the equipment at ₹7,599, excluding GST. Transport unions argue that this restriction stifles competition and forces vehicle owners to pay inflated prices.

Financial strain

K. Radhakrishna Holla, president of the Karnataka State Travel Operators' Association, highlighted the financial strain this mandate places on vehicle owners.

"Forcing vehicle owners to replace existing tracking systems with VLTDs and panic buttons increases their financial burden. Many cab operators had already installed GPS tracking devices voluntarily to enhance passenger safety and curb illegal activities. Now, being compelled to purchase additional equipment at high prices from a limited set of vendors is especially difficult for small-scale, independent drivers," he said.

Echoing similar concerns, Sukumar R., a cab driver, emphasised the difficulties faced by drivers who rely on daily earnings to meet expenses.

"We are already struggling with rising costs, and now we have to buy these expensive tracking devices. If the government is serious about improving safety, they should at least offer financial assistance or provide these devices at a more affordable rate," he said.

Air travel of CM, Governor, CJI costs State exchequer ₹34.58 cr. over two years

Darshan Devaiah B.P.
BENGALURU

A senior official says all travel undertaken by the Chief Minister and other dignitaries was strictly for official purposes

The air travel expenses incurred for the movement of Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, Governor Thaawarchand Gehlot, and the Chief Justice of India have cost the Karnataka exchequer ₹34.58 crore over the financial years 2023-24 and 2024-25, according to data provided by the Public Works, Bridges and Inland Water Transport Department.

In a recent reply in the Karnataka Legislative Council, Mr. Siddaramaiah disclosed the expenditure details, stating that in 2023-24, the government spent ₹13.38 crore on air travel for dignitaries. In 2024-25, the expenditure rose to ₹21.20 crore.

"Among the dignitaries, Mr. Siddaramaiah accounted for the most helicopter trips, followed by Mr. Gehlot. The Chief Justice of India also travelled by helicopter on a few occasions during his visits to Karnataka," the data revealed.

The helicopter services for these dignitaries were provided by GMP Air Charters, facilitating their travel within Karnataka and to neighbouring States for various events and official programmes. Instances of specific air travel costs include a flight for the Chief Minister on September 11, 2023, from HAL to Mysuru and back, which cost ₹11,32,800. Another instance on October 6, 2023, saw the Chief Minister travelling from HAL to Chitradurga and Hiriyur, before returning to HAL, incurring an expense of ₹9,67,600 for a helicopter ride.

A senior official from the department clarified to *The Hindu* that all air travel undertaken by the Chief Minister and other dignitaries was strictly for official purposes. The official asserted that no government funds were utilised for personal or political campaign-related travel.

"The government hires helicopters or aircraft on rent at a fixed amount whenever required. These services are used by the Governor, Chief Minister, and, in special cases, the Chief Justice of India or other Ministers as necessary," the official added.

Man murdered in Shahapur, another killed in retaliation

The Hindu Bureau
YADGIR

In what is suspected to be a case of revenge, a 55-year-old history sheeter was brutally murdered by his rivals near Sadyapur village on Bidar-Srirangapatna State Highway in Shahapur taluk of Yadgir district on Sunday.

The murdered history-sheeter was identified as Mapanna Bheemappa Badiger, a native of Madriki village in Shahapur taluk.

The crime happened when Mapanna and a 52-year-old Ali Sab, also a native of Madriki village who was accompanying him, were returning to the village from Bheemarayanagudi on a motorcycle after getting a haircut and purchasing some vegetables, police sources said.

Both Mapanna and Ali Sab, who was riding the motorcycle, were intercepted by Mapanna's rivals near Sadyapur village. Mapanna was attacked with sharp-edged weapons that killed him on the spot, while Ali Sab managed to escape from the scene and hid in the village.

After coming to know of the murder, several followers and the surviving sons of Mapanna attacked Ali Sab with a knife, suspecting his hand in the crime.

Due to the knife attack, Ali Sab suffered serious injuries and died on his way to hospital, the sources added.

Throwing light on the crime, Superintendent of Police Pruthvik Shankar, who rushed to the spot, told *The Hindu* that Hussaini, a history sheeter who made a failed attempt to kill Mapanna in 2014, is suspected to be involved in the murder of Mapanna.

Mr. Shankar said that a case has been registered against Hussaini and seven others in connection with the murder of Mapanna.

A case against the sons of Mapanna and eight others in connection with the murder of Ali Sab will be registered in Bheemarayanagudi Police Station. Investigation will be conducted, he added.

Senior police officers, two Deputy Superintendents of Police from Yadgir and Shorapur and additional police forces have been rushed to the village to ensure law and order. Also, policemen have been posted at the taluk hospital where Mapanna's body is kept.

Apart from that, three platoons of the District Armed Reserve Police have been deployed for security even as the village wore a deserted look after the crime.

Mr. Shankar, who is monitoring the situation, has formed police teams to arrest all the accused involved in the two murders.

Bharat Scouts and Guides award presentation ceremony today

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The Bharat Scouts and Guides, Karnataka, will hold the presentation ceremony of Chathurtha Charan, Herak Pankh, Rajyapuraskar certificates to Cubs, Bulbuls, Scouts, Guides, Rovers and Rangers on Monday.

Governor Thaawarchand Gehlot will present the awards to the eligible Cubs, Bulbuls, Scouts, Guides, Rovers, and Rangers. Speaker of Karnataka Legislative Assembly, U.T. Khader will grace the occasion as the chief guest.

The event will be held at Glass House, Raj Bhavan, at 4 p.m.

गृह मंत्रालय
MINISTRY OF
HOME AFFAIRS
सत्यमेव जयते

National Forensic Sciences University
राष्ट्रीय न्यायालयिक विज्ञान विश्वविद्यालय
An Institution of National Importance under Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India
राष्ट्रीय महत्व का संस्थान, गृह मंत्रालय, भारत सरकार

NFSU
विद्या अमृतं अश्नुते

Admissions Open for Academic Year 2025-26

NFSU Campuses at Gandhinagar, Delhi, Tripura, Goa, Bhopal, Pune, Dharwad, Manipur, Guwahati, Bhubaneswar*, Chennai*, Raipur*, Jaipur*, and Nagpur*.

School of Forensic Science
M. Sc. Forensic Science
Gandhinagar Delhi Goa Tripura Bhopal Guwahati Raipur Bhubaneswar Jaipur Nagpur Chennai
M. Sc. Forensic Biotechnology
Gandhinagar
M. Sc. Multimedia Forensics
Gandhinagar
M. A. Mass Communication & Forensic Journalism
Gandhinagar
B. Sc. - M. Sc. Forensic Science
Gandhinagar Delhi Goa Tripura Dharwad Bhopal
Professional Diploma in Fingerprint Science
Delhi
Professional Diploma in Forensic Document Examination
Gandhinagar Delhi
Professional Diploma in Crime Scene Management
Gandhinagar Delhi Goa Tripura Bhopal Guwahati Manipur Pune Dharwad Raipur Bhubaneswar Jaipur Nagpur Chennai
Professional Diploma in Forensic Journalism (Online Mode)
Gandhinagar
Professional Diploma in Forensic Ballistics
Gandhinagar
Professional Diploma in Canine Forensics
Delhi

School of Medico-Legal Studies
M. Sc. Toxicology
Gandhinagar
Professional Diploma in Forensic Archaeology
Gandhinagar

School of Cyber Security & Digital Forensics
M. Tech. Cyber Security
Gandhinagar
M. Tech. Artificial Intelligence & Data Science (Specialization in Cyber Security)
Gandhinagar Goa
M. Sc. Cyber Security
Gandhinagar Goa Bhopal Nagpur Chennai
M. Sc. Digital Forensics & Information Security
Gandhinagar Delhi Goa Bhopal Raipur Jaipur Bhubaneswar
B. Tech. - M. Tech. Computer Science & Engineering (Cyber Security)
Gandhinagar Delhi Tripura Dharwad Guwahati
Professional Diploma in Semiconductor Security
Gandhinagar
Professional Diploma in Cyber Crime Investigation
Guwahati Manipur

School of Engineering and Technology
M. Sc. Nanotechnology (Specialization in Forensic Nanotechnology)
Gandhinagar
M. Sc. Food Technology (Specialization in Forensic Food Analysis)
Gandhinagar
M. Tech. Civil Engineering (Specialization in Forensic Structural Engineering)
Gandhinagar

School of Police Science and Security Studies
M. Sc. Homeland Security
Gandhinagar
M. A. Police & Security Studies
Gandhinagar
Professional Diploma in Security Studies
Gandhinagar

School of Behavioural Forensics
M. Phil. Clinical Psychology (RCI Approved)
Gandhinagar Delhi
M. Sc. Neuropsychology
Gandhinagar
M. Sc. Clinical Psychology
Gandhinagar Delhi
M. Sc. Forensic Psychology
Gandhinagar
M. A. Criminology
Gandhinagar Delhi
B. Sc. Criminology & Forensic Science
Gandhinagar Delhi
Professional Diploma in Cyber Psychology
Gandhinagar
Professional Diploma in Investigative Psychology
Gandhinagar

School of Management Studies
MBA Forensic Accounting and Fraud Investigation
Gandhinagar
MBA Cyber Security Management
Gandhinagar
MBA Hospital and Healthcare Management
Gandhinagar
MBA Business Analytics and Intelligence
Gandhinagar
BBA - MBA
(With Specialization in Forensic Accounting and Fraud Investigation / Financial Management / Business Analytics and Intelligence / Hospital & Healthcare Management)
Gandhinagar Delhi

School of Law, Forensic Justice and Policy Studies
LL. M. (Cyber Law and Cyber Crime Investigation)
Gandhinagar Bhubaneswar
LL. M. (Criminal Law and Criminal Justice Administration)
Gandhinagar Delhi
B. Sc.; LL. B. (Hons.)
Gandhinagar
LL. B. (Hons.)
Gandhinagar
B.B.A; LL. B. (Hons.)
Delhi
Professional Diploma in Cyber Law
Gandhinagar

School of Pharmacy
M. Pharm. Forensic Pharmacy
Gandhinagar
M. Pharm. Pharmaceutical Quality Assurance (PCI Approved)
Gandhinagar
M. Sc. Chemistry (Specialization in Forensic Analytical Chemistry)
Gandhinagar
M. Sc. Environmental Science (Specialization in Environmental Forensics)
Gandhinagar
M. Sc. Pharmaceutical Chemistry
Gandhinagar
Professional Diploma in Industrial and Fire Safety, Hygiene & Environmental Management
Gandhinagar

Last Date to Apply is 05th May 2025

* Proposed Campuses

For eligibility criteria and other information please visit https://nfsu.ac.in/admission

@NFSU_Official @nfsu.official

Online admissions commences from 18th March 2025

For Admission in online Certification courses visit: nfsu.mha.gov.in

Scan to Apply

(Sd/-)
Executive Registrar
NFSU, Gandhinagar

A BG-BGE

Student from Meghalaya dies due to suspected food poisoning

Members of the business community in Malavalli, mainly from Rajasthan, organised a feast following Holi celebrations

The Hindu Bureau
MYSURU

A student from a Northeastern State died on Sunday due to suspected food poisoning at Malavalli in Mandya district, while scores of others have fallen ill, prompting an investigation by the health and law enforcement authorities.

The deceased was identified as Kerlang, 13, from Meghalaya.

According to Mohan, the District Health Officer of Mandya, members of the business community in Malavalli, mainly from Rajasthan, organised a feast following Holi celebrations on Friday.

Vegetarian food prepared in a local hotel was consumed after celebrations, and it was also distributed to students residing in the nearby hostel of a private educational institution. This included 24 students from Northeast India who were studying there.

Minister in charge of Mandya district N. Cheluvarayaswamy enquiring the health of those affected by food poisoning at the Mandya Institute of Medical Science hospital on Sunday. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

But symptoms of food poisoning, including vomiting and diarrhoea, were reported on Saturday following which the Health Department officials visited the school, provided treatment, and informed the authorities to contact them in case of any emergency. There were no distress calls further but on Sunday Kerlang suddenly collapsed and died before the doctors could attend to him.

Developed symptoms

It has transpired that apart from students, about 30 to 40 others who took part in the feast, have also developed symptoms of food poisoning and have got themselves admitted to private hospitals in Mandya, Mysuru, and other places, said Mr. Mohan. Following the death of the 13-year-old student, the authorities shifted all the boys from the private institution to hospitals in Mandya and Malavalli for treatment.

The officer said that the food sample would be difficult to come by as the "rice bath" was prepared on Friday. "We will take sample of the ingredients and subject them to test," he added.

Mandya district in charge Minister N. Cheluvarayaswamy visited the Mandya Institute of Medical Science and Hospital on Sunday and enquired about the health of the children affected by food poisoning.

Meanwhile, Deputy Commissioner Kumara, said the parents of the deceased and other students who have taken ill have been informed.

Besides, the private school had only day scholar students and it was not residential as it did not have permission or facilities to run a hostel.

Mr. Kumara said action would be taken against the institution for negligence. Malavalli police have registered a case and launched a probe.

Maoist arrested in Kerala gave first hint of desire of comrades to surrender in Karnataka

Laiqh A. Khan
MYSURU

The genesis of the recent surrender of Maoists in Karnataka has been traced to revelations made by incarcerated Maoist leader B.G. Krishnamurthy during a video call with litterateur Banjagere Jayaprakash more than a year ago.

While in custody in Kerala, Mr. Krishnamurthy had apparently sought to speak with Mr. Jayaprakash, whom he had known since their Karnataka Vimochana Ranga (KVR) days, before he drifted towards the People's War Group (PWG) and went underground.

Hailing from Sringeri in Karnataka, Mr. Krishnamurthy had been operating in the forests spread across the tri-junction of Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, and Kerala till his arrest by the Kerala police.

In December 2023, Mr. Jayaprakash was approached by intelligence officials, who told him about Mr. Krishnamurthy's request to speak with him. When he agreed, a video call was arranged between them.

"It was then that Krishnamurthy, for the first time, revealed the desire of seven to eight persons from his group to surrender in Karnataka," Mr. Jayaprakash told *The Hindu*.

Though members of his group were looking forward to surrendering even before his arrest, Mr. Krishnamurthy had stopped them from doing so. After the arrest of Mr. Krishnamurthy, who was the lone member of the Central Committee of the CPI (Maoist), the rest of the group had lost touch with the leadership.

According to Mr. Krishnamurthy, the rest of the Maoists were ready to surrender if anyone from the civil society whom they trust came forward and facilitated the process. Though Mr. Jayaprakash suggested the name of farmers' leader Kadidal Shamanna to take the lead, it did not materialise as the latter's wife felt Mr. Shamanna's health would not permit him to do so.

Mr. Krishnamurthy apparently sought for an interaction with Mr. Jayaprakash once again to take the surrender process forward as the Maoists were struggling to sustain themselves in the absence of local resources, snapping of ties with the central committee, and the heat turned on them by the Kerala police, which had resorted to 'encounters'.

"If you send them a message, they will come to Karnataka and surrender. They are unable to sustain themselves," Mr. Krishnamurthy reportedly informed Mr. Jayaprakash.

Maoist surrender policy

Only after this development was the State-level committee re-constituted in January 2024 to oversee implementation of the Maoist surrender policy, said Mr. Jayaprakash, who was one of the members of the civil society along with advocate Sripal and journalist Parvatheesha Bilidale. The chief of the Anti-Naxal Force (ANF) was the convener of the committee, which was chaired by the Chief Secretary. Subsequently, appeals for the Maoists' surrender, bearing the phone numbers of the three civil society members, were distributed in areas that they were likely to visit. "Reaching our message to them was also a challenge as they did not use mobile phones or watch television," he said. The appeal was also broadcast on the radio in Karnataka, Kerala, and Tamil Nadu.

The civil society members had laid down a condition that they would participate in the surrender process only if the government assures them that it will not resort to an encounter, but the condition was violated when Vikram Gowda was killed in an 'encounter' with the ANF, rued Mr. Jayaprakash.

First appeal

It took the Maoists about a year after they first issued an appeal to respond with an offer to surrender while listing out certain demands. The offer was followed up by a visit by Mr. Sripal, besides Shantigagi Nagarikara Vedike member Noor Sridhar and others to meet the Maoists and pave the way for their surrender.

Missing son of Coast Guard officer traced to Hubballi

The Hindu Bureau
MANGALURU

A 17-year-old class 12 student from Mangaluru, who was reportedly missing from his house in Kunjathbail since March 13, was traced to Hubballi on Saturday. According to police fear of examinations had made the boy to run away from the house.

The Kavoor police said Jebin Kumar Badra, son of an Indian Coast Guard officer, was reported missing from Coast Guard Quarters in Kunjathbail on March 13. A missing complaint had been filed in this regard.

By closely monitoring images of close circuit television cameras, the police gathered technical evidence and used intelligence network to trace the boy to the Hubballi Railway station. He was later brought to Mangaluru and handed over to parents.

Similarly, 17-year-old II year PU student Digant of Farangipet had left the house on February 25 said to be out of fear of examinations. Discovery of his blood stained slippers and his mobile phone near railway track raised concerns about safety of the boy. It was on March 8 that Dakshina Kannada police traced Digant in supermarket in Udupi. He had travelled by bus to Shivamogga, reached Mysuru by train. He worked for few days in a hotel in Nandi Hills, before returning to Udupi.

THE HINDU
EDUCATIONPLUS
GET THE EDGE Follow us facebook.com/thehindu twitter.com/the_hindu instagram.com/the_hindu

K. Elango

GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCKPHOTO

An odyssey of the mind

With e-reading becoming the predominant mode of reading, an educator lists the benefits of print reading

In Homer's epic *Odyssey*, Zeus, the king of gods, laments, "Men are fools... They blame the gods for their misfortunes, ignoring our advice. They don't accept that their own foolish actions lead to their downfall." This exactly mirrors the plight of e-readers, whose psychic state resembles that of Odyssey's crew when their ship was tossed at the island of lotus eaters.

E-reading has rapidly emerged as the predominant mode of reading, subduing traditional print reading (p-reading) in less than two decades, facilitated by desktops, laptops, tablets and e-readers. More than these devices, smartphones have positioned themselves as the critical medium in this situation. It is rare to find someone's hands, pockets, or handbags free of them. In India alone, there were about 660 million users in 2024 and the number is projected to reach 1.2 billion by the end of the current year, due to the push towards digital literacy.

Problems

However, paradoxically, excessive screen exposure has led to a decline in both physical and cognitive prowess. Researchers predict that, by 2050, about 40% of children and adolescents worldwide would be short-sighted and every hour they spend with screens exacerbates the ailment. In addition, innumerable problems related to every dimension of life have been identified: neck pain, back pain, sleep deficiency, lack of concentration, alienation, aggression, depression ... the list is endless. These severely impact academic performances from a young age. Yet they are so intoxicated, any attempt at detoxification hardly produces any positive results.

Despite the necessity of smartphones, students mainly use them for entertainment, resulting in dopamine addiction. They scroll through social media at lightning speed, pause their eyes only for videos, pictures, images, and photos, and any effort of reading terminates with the first three or four lines. Given that each on-screen line contains about six words, even a brief write-up appears humongous and remains unread. Juggling an average of five platforms, the avalanche of information they encounter leads to overload, lack of focus, off-memory storage, and an impossibility of retrieval, almost amounting to non-reading.

Also, with social media being carriers of misinformation and disinformation, they often consume the news at face value, eventually leading to skewed perceptions, and creating a widening gap between real and the virtual reality.

E-readers have developed a disregard for books, dismissing them as 'boring' as they contain only a 'sea of words'. In contrast, e-texts are 'alluring' with their dynamic images, photographs, highlights, hyper-texts, appealing layouts, varying fonts and sizes, and real-time updates. These features often make them fixated. However, this phenomenon known as 'doomscrolling' certainly leads to 'brainrot'.

Benefits

P-reading, on the other hand, is a complex cognitive process, demanding a deep level of concentration. Decoding a text, namely, meaning-making, relies on prior knowledge (schema) a reader takes to it – inexperienced readers may be content with comprehending basic meaning, but they can graduate to advanced level through sustained effort. Reading involves multiple layers of interaction: at the end of a cline, readers can uncover hidden meanings, engage in inter-textuality to fathom similarities and differences, generate parallel texts, sift facts from opinions, and appreciate sophisticated linguistic elements such as metaphors, allusions, ambiguities.

For an enriched reader, p-reading is not a shallow experience of absorbing information but a creative and critical cognitive odyssey; one that transports them to other worlds and, at the same time, get under the skin of writers. It encompasses a broad spectrum of multiple sub-skills, which are untapped in e-reading. To celebrate reading as an immersive and intellectually rewarding experience, it must be uncluttered with push notifications, advertisements, and not compelling us for likes, shares, and comments.

A decisive evidence to establish the superiority of p-reading can be found among countries that have promoted tech-centric education but are now on reversal course. In 2009 Sweden 'went all-in on digital education, ditching textbooks for screens' but is now investing 104 million to bring back textbooks having realised the detrimental effects on learners' reading and comprehension skills.

Truly, the shift is a wake-up call for e-readers to either switch to p-reading or strike a balance.

Views expressed are personal

The writer is a retired Professor of English and Chief Executive Chair of the English Language Teachers' Association of India

Internship portal

Henry Harvin Education has launched the Yuva Intern Portal, an AI-powered virtual internship platform offering more than 10,000 job simulations. It aims to offer structured internship programmes across diverse sectors such as healthcare, data analytics, software development, banking, finance, logistics, construction, media, and more.

For more details, visit yuvaintern.com/

GALGOTIAS UNIVERSITY NOW RANKED AMONGST THE WORLD'S BEST

BY QS ASIA & THE WORLD UNIVERSITY RANKINGS 2025

QS World University Rankings

Galgotias University
187
Southern Asia

QS WORLD UNIVERSITY RANKINGS ASIA RANKED 2025

QS WORLD UNIVERSITY RANKINGS ASIA RANKED 2025

Galgotias University
621-640
ASIA 2025

THE World University Rankings 2025

45th Among Top Indian Universities - both Govt. & Private
in 1000-1200 Band - Worldwide

Dr. Dhruv Galgotia, CEO, Galgotias University felicitated by Her Excellency **Smt. Anandiben Patel,** Hon'ble Governor of Uttar Pradesh for University's exceptional performance in the QS Asia - World University Rankings, 2025.

AN HONOUR BEYOND WORDS. A LEGACY BEYOND BOUNDARIES.

We will continue to carry forward the vision of our Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi Ji of making India a *Vishvaguru* & *Viksit Bharat* and the dream of our Dynamic Leader, Hon'ble Chief Minister of UP, Shri Yogi Aditya Nath Ji of making the State of Uttar Pradesh a truly Global Knowledge Superpower.

G SCALE
GALGOTIAS STUDENT CENTERED ACTIVE LEARNING ECOSYSTEM
• Critical Thinking • Collaboration • Engagement • Experiential Learning

Record Breaking Placements | Facilitating more Learning through Active/Collaborative Engagement | Fostering Entrepreneurial Spirit. Cultivating Job Creators over Job Seekers | Being in NCR and in close proximity with major industrial, corporate and aviation hubs, our students get the best of the faculty and industry exposure that enable our students to have a distinct edge over other universities

The Edge That Sets Us Apart

Amongst #98 in India (Management Category) | #50 in India (Pharmacy Category)

By NIRF Ranking 2024 — NATIONAL INSTITUTIONAL RANKING FRAMEWORK | शिक्षा मंत्रालय Ministry of Education Government of India

TOP 3 in India for filing MAXIMUM PATENTS

NAAC A+ Accreditation in First Cycle | Ranked Platinum+ Band: Institution of Prominence OBE Rankings 2024 | NBA Accredited Tier 1 for Computer Science Engineering, Mechanical Engineering, Electronics, & Communications Engineering, B.Pharm and MBA | School of Business AACSB Business Education Alliance Member

5th Ranked Amongst the Top Private Universities by Times B School Survey 2025

Apply Today for Career Focussed 2025-26 UG/PG/DIPLOMA/Ph.D. Programmes

Engineering | Computer Applications | Biosciences & Technology | Clinical Healthcare | Forensic Science | Design | Education | Nursing | Liberal Education
Media and Communications Studies | Law | Agriculture | Basic Sciences | Finance & Commerce | Pharmacy | Allied & Health Sciences | Business | Aviation
Logistics & Supply Chain Management | Hospitality & Tourism | Polytechnic | Vocational Education

Launched India's Finest Active Learning Campus in Consultancy Collaboration with

InsPIRE at NANYANG TECHNOLOGICAL UNIVERSITY SINGAPORE

GALGOTIAS INCUBATION CENTRE
For Research Innovation Startup and Entrepreneurs

GALGOTIAS UNIVERSITY

For the complete list of programmes offered and to apply online visit
www.galgotiasuniversity.edu.in
+91 9582847072 / +91 9717300418
+91 9810162221 / +91 120 4370000

From Page One

Mangaluru police arrest two South Africans

"For the last six months, our CCB team was closely tracking the movement of the two South African women," the officer said.

After a tip-off about the arrival of the accused in the early hours of March 14, a team of CCB sleuths reached the Bengaluru International Airport. Soon after landing at the airport, the two accused booked a taxi to move around the city and deliver MDMA.

The sleuths followed the accused for nearly six hours. The CCB sleuths raided a place in Neeladri Nagar in Electronics City on March 14 and arrested the two women.

Apart from 37.878 kg of MDMA, the police also seized four mobile phones, two trolley bags, two passports, and ₹18,460 from the two women.

During the brief questioning, it came to light that in the past one year the two women had flown down 37 times to Bengaluru and 22 times to Mumbai to deliver MDMA.

"We are yet to know how they managed to hoodwink security personnel at these major airports." The officer said the police suspect accused of procuring MDMA from abroad or from places close to Delhi.

Mr. Agrawal said Fanta and Adonis had been into delivery of MDMA for the past 18 months. Both were accused of using fake passports and visa.

Fanta, who is into food cart business, came to India on a business visa in 2020 and continued to stay in Delhi. Adonis, who is into selling ready-made clothes in Delhi, entered India in July 2016 on medical visa.

As the accused were involved in inter-State operations on a large scale, the city police would involve the Narcotic Control Bureau to find out more information about the accused and their alleged associates.

Mr. Agrawal lauded efforts of the CCB team, led by inspector K.M. Rafiq, in detecting the major drug peddling racket.

The team comprised sub-inspectors M.V. Sudeep, Sharanappa Bhandari, and Naredra, assistant sub-inspectors K.V. Mohan, Ram Poojary, Shenappa, and Sujan Shetty.

An award to the team will be announced soon by Home Minister G. Parameshwara, Mr. Agarwal said.

Delimitation is conspiracy to reduce political power of South India: Kharge

AICC president claims Union government seems to have decided to reduce Lok Sabha seats in the South, and increase the total number for North India by around 30%

The Hindu Bureau
BELAGAVI

AICC president Mallikarjun Kharge on Sunday alleged that delimitation of Lok Sabha constituencies was a conspiracy to reduce the political power of South India.

"In the name of delimitation, the BJP is trying to stifle the South. It is a ploy to reduce our bargaining power by reducing our political representation. The BJP seems to have decided to reduce the number of Parliament seats from the South, and increase the total number of seats for North India by around 30%," he said, during the inauguration of the birth centenary celebrations of Krishnagouda Hanumanthagouda Patil, former Minister and Congress leader, and father of Minister H.K. Patil.

AICC president Mallikarjun Kharge, Deputy Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar, Council Chairman Basavaraj Horatti, Minister for Law and Parliamentary Affairs H.K. Patil, and others at the inauguration of the birth centenary celebrations of Krishnagouda Hanumanthagouda Patil in Gadag on Sunday. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

'Fight such injustice'

Mr. Kharge called upon all political leaders to fight against such "injustice" in a non -partisan manner. "When it comes to development of the State, we should forget our differences. I recall former Chief Minister D. Devaraj Urs saying that poverty alleviation will never be achieved if power and money get mixed with politics. We should never forget this," Mr. Kharge said.

He alleged that the Union government was neglecting the education sector. "It is not giving it its due importance. Many posts of teachers in central education institutions are vacant, but the government is not taking any steps to fill them. Owing to this, children from poor families are not getting proper education," he said.

"There are over 40,000 vacant posts in Navodaya Schools in the country, 7,400 in Kendriya Vidyalayas, and 5,400 in central universities. At least 90,000 government schools under the Central government have been closed across the country and of these, 50,000 belong to Uttar Pradesh and Bihar. What is alarming is that in the same period of time, 40% of private schools have been opened. This clearly means that poor students have nowhere to go," he said.

Mr. Kharge said that over 13,000 SC/ST students of various central universities were deprived of scholarships and demanded that they should be restarted.

He requested the K.H. Patil foundation to provide scholarships to at least 100 students per year.

Deputy Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar, Council Chairman Basavaraj Horatti, Forest Minister Eshwar Khandre, Law and Tourism Minister H.K. Patil, government chief whip Salim Ahmed, former MLA D.R. Patil. and others were present.

Minorities' welfare is not appeasement, says Shivakumar

The Hindu Bureau
BELAGAVI

Strongly defending providing reservation in government contracts to Muslims, Deputy Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar on Sunday maintained that the welfare of minorities is a duty of the government and any step in that direction cannot be called appeasement.

He was responding to allegations by B.Y. Vijayendra, BJP State president, that creating a 4% quota for minorities in government contracts was anti-constitutional.

Launching a counter-attack at Mr. Vijayendra, who had referred to providing equal opportunities and rights for everyone, Mr. Shivakumar asked him to make a minority member from his party a MLC or a Rajya Sabha member or ensure that a minority becomes Minister at the Centre.

"Why is the BJP talking about *Sabka Saath Sabka Vikas*? If they are so concerned about minorities, let them take care of them. I want to know why the BJP does not make Muslim leaders members of Parliament or State legislatures and the Union Cabinet?" he said.

"Minority groups are citizens of this country. The Central or the State governments are duty bound to protect them and implements schemes for their development. Such schemes or projects cannot be termed appeasement. These communities are residents of Karnataka and we are naturally concerned about their welfare. This not anti-constitutional in any way," he said.

> Minority groups are citizens of this country. The Central or the State governments are duty bound to protect them and implements schemes for their development.
>
> **D.K. SHIVAKUMAR,**
> Deputy Chief Minister

"Mr. Vijayendra should read and understand works by Kuvempu. Kuvempu has described India as a peaceful garden of all communities. If Mr. Vijayendra reads it, he will understand what those lines mean," Mr. Shivakumar said.

Aiming for victory

Holding on: A participant during a State-level bullock cart race organised by villagers at Nagenahalli near Chikkamagaluru on Sunday. PTI

Forest Dept. captures trouble-causing elephant in Hassan district

The Hindu Bureau
SHIVAMOGGA

The Forest Department captured a trouble-causing tusker with the help of tamed elephants at a private estate in Somanahalli in Bikkodu hobli of Belur taluk in Hassan district on Sunday.

The Elephant Task Force (ETF) conducted the operation following the protests by the people of Belur in the wake of recent deaths in elephant attacks.

The tusker was aged around 18 to 20. The staff of the ETF and rapid response teams kept track of elephants that caused trouble in Arehalli hobli of the taluk. They identified one of them. A veterinarian fired the tranquillizer dart to sedate the animal. Later, it was captured with the help of a team of tamed elephants at the estate belonging to Mamatha Rajesh.

The tusker, aged between 18 and 20, was captured in a private estate near Bikkodu in Belur taluk on Sunday. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Tamed elephants – Prashantha, Mahendra, Ekalavya, Dhananjaya, Harsha, Kanjan, and Bheema – were involved in the operation. Senior officers of the department monitored the operation, which will continue for a few more days.

Conservator of Forests (Hassan Circle) V. Yedukondalu, Deputy Conservator of Forests Sourabh Kumar, and others were present. They conducted the operations as per the guidance of Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (Wildlife) Subhash K. Malkade and Additional Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (Elephant Project) R. Manoj. Veterinarians from Nagarahole and Bandipur and officers of sub-divisions in Hassan participated in the operation.

The department decided to conduct the operation after a woman died in an elephant attack at Kogodu in Belur taluk on Friday, March 14. The incident led to protests by local people. This was the fourth death in elephant attacks in Hassan district in the last two months. On Saturday, Minister for Forests Eshwar Khandre instructed the officers to capture trouble-causing three elephants immediately.

Two State Ministers are involved in Ranya Rao smuggling case: Yatnal

The Hindu Bureau
BELAGAVI

BJP leader Basanagouda R. Patil Yatnal on Sunday stated that he had information about two State Ministers being involved in the gold smuggling case in which actor Ranya Rao was arrested. "I will reveal their names in the Assembly session on Monday," Mr. Yatnal told presspersons in Vijayapura.

"I have obtained all information regarding the Ranya Rao gold smuggling case. I know which Ministers are supporting the actor, who helped her get official protocol support like exemption from checking and also, vehicles and security. I also know from where she used to get the gold, where she hid it, and where and to whom she sold it. I will reveal all this in the Assembly," he said.

> I have obtained all information regarding the Ranya Rao gold smuggling case. I know which Ministers are supporting the actor and who helped her get official protocol support. I also know from where she used to get the gold, where she hid it, and where she sold it.
>
> **BASANAGOUDA R. PATIL YATNAL,**
> BJP leader

'Centre not responsible'

He said that it was wrong to hold the Union government responsible for the smuggling incident.

"Union Ministers are not involved in the incident. I am sure about that. But I know which two members of the State Cabinet are involved," he said.

To a query, he said that he knew that all airports are managed by the Airports Authority of India which is a Union government agency. "If it is found that Customs officers are involved, then I will not support them," he said.

He, however, argued that this case cannot be seen as a failure of the Union government agency as two State Cabinet members protected the accused.

"It is true that the BJP government sanctioned land for Ranya Rao's proposed industrial venture. BJP leader Murugesh Nirani has agreed that he sanctioned land to her company when he was the Minister for Industries. But then the land has not been transferred as the actress did not pay the requisite amount of money," Mr. Yatnal said.

CORRIDORS OF POWER

No answer to questions

Officials of some departments seem to be deliberately not giving answers to questions raised by members in the Legislative Assembly, said B.P. Harish (BJP).

Agitated over not getting an answer to a question on acquisition of 20 acres of farmland by the KIADB for Shamanur Sugar Factory, a unit owned by a powerful political family belonging to the ruling Congress, in Harihar in Davangere district, Mr. Harish sought an explanation from Speaker U.T. Khader.

Other members of the opposition too extended their support to Mr. Harish and narrated their experiences of how officials "deliberately" not give answers to questions sought during the legislature session.

Mr. Khader said a committee headed by Deputy Speaker Rudrappa Lamani has been constituted to look into the matter. The Speaker warned that officials who do not give answers to questions would be punished. It remains to be see if the government servants will heed to the warning.

Question Hour losing relevance?

Assembly Speaker U.T. Khader *(pictured)* allegedly denying sufficient time and opportunity to members to seek clarifications from the government on the questions they raised during the legislature session irked many in the Opposition. Members claimed that more time was being wasted during Question Hour by frequent interference by the Speaker while seeking clarifications.

The Speaker's argument was that mere asking questions would not solve the problem. Mr. Khader's contention was that members should follow up issues with Ministers and departments concerned to address their problems.

However, Opposition members argued that instead of directing the Ministers to address grievances, the Speaker instructed members to hold meetings with Ministers for almost all questions. Frequent absence of Ministers during Question Hour too irked the Opposition.

The long wait for 'good news'

The Opposition leaders spare no opportunity to taunt Deputy Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar on his chief ministerial aspirations.

On Friday, a day after he hosted a dinner for his party colleagues on completing five years at the helm of the Karnataka Pradesh Congress Committee, Mr. Shivakumar looked jovial and relaxed in the Legislative Council.

BJP member N. Ravi Kumar asked him if any "good news" was behind his "pleased look." An unfazed Mr. Shivakumar said, "Pleasing people is equal to worshipping Shiva." Continuing in a lighter vein, Mr. Ravi Kumar insisted that he answer the query on when "good news" was expected, and the Deputy Chief Minister said, "I have been climbing up the ladder since 1985. I have actually climbed down a few notches now due to the troubles you have created. It was you who sent me to Tihar Jail."

Nagesh Prabhu
Sharath S. Srivatsa

How delivery apps are changing the retail scene and shopping preferences

With delivery apps becoming increasingly popular, provision stores and supermarkets are struggling to keep afloat

Yemen S.
BENGALURU

File photo of a Kirana store in Bengaluru.

For 22-year-old Rachana R., walking from her home to the neighbourhood store a few roads away to buy groceries or vegetables has always seemed like an effort. So Rachana and many like her have embraced the idea of online shopping wholeheartedly. For a large section of Bengalureans, running to the grocery store to buy essentials or taking leisurely strolls through the market over the weekend is a thing of the past.

Bengaluru's shopping habits have undergone rapid transformation, driven by the rise of instant delivery services and e-commerce giants. The number of items that get home delivered within minutes continues to increase, with clothes, makeup, luxury items and gadgets getting added to the list.

Apps like Blinkit, Zepto, Swiggy Instamart, Bigbasket, Flipkart Minutes and Amazon Fresh have redefined convenience, bringing everything from fresh vegetables to mobile phones to customers' doorsteps in minutes. With their promise of speed, variety, and ease, these platforms are reshaping traditional retail, posing challenges to local kirana stores while catering to a fast-paced urban lifestyle.

Convenience

"When you shop online, you do not have to go to different stores. Everything is under the same platform. And the best part for a working woman or anyone who is juggling things is that it eases your chores. For example, when you must cook, most vegetables, fruits and greens available on these platforms are already cut, all you have to do is toss them in a pan," says 28-year-old Arpita Rajpurohit who works in a radio channel.

Another big plus, she says, is that most of the items available on the apps are also often cheaper than that of a supermarket or provision store. "So, life is just easier with these apps," she adds.

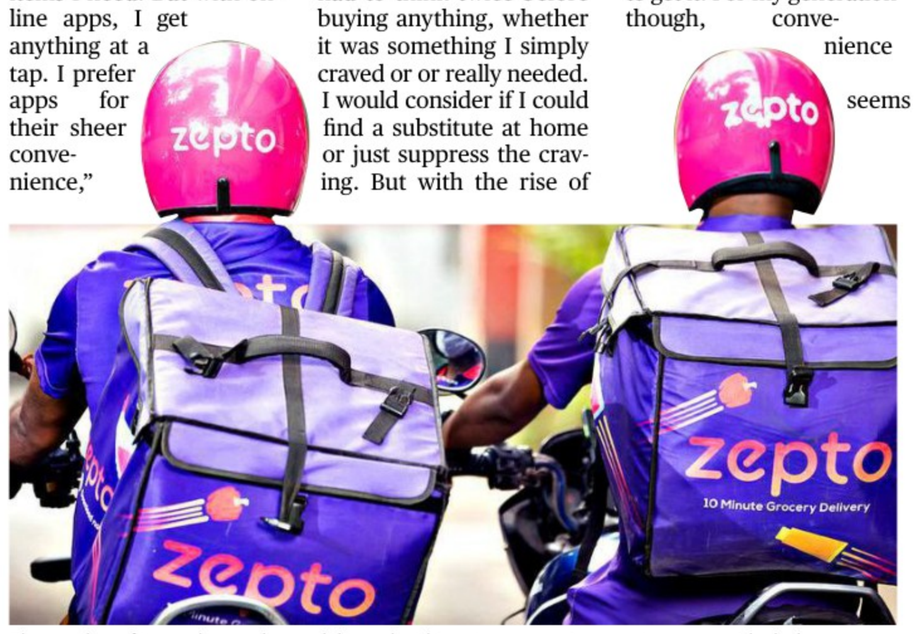
Shradha Joshi, an IT employee in her early 20s, says that every day she has early work meetings online or at the office, so combining that with shopping is next to impossible. "Later in the day, work keeps me busy till late evenings, sometimes till 9 or 10 p.m. But when I do have time, I do not really feel like stepping out to buy anything. I just want to rest because of the hectic schedule throughout the week. So, I am highly dependent on these online platforms now."

Similar is the explanation of Vaishnavi Chandrashekhar, a 27-year-old news producer who says finding time to go out and buy essentials in between a hectic schedule is tough. "My day starts at 4.45 a.m., and ends around 11.30 p.m., or past midnight. These apps, even if they charge a little extra for delivery, save my energy and cost of fuel. The time these apps take for delivery is almost the same as going out myself, sometimes even less. It just makes life easier," she argues.

The flip side of easy access

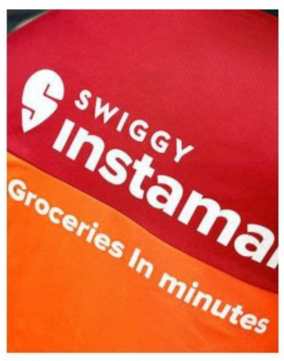
But for some the choice of online shopping is driven by the absence of brick-and-mortar stores in their vicinity. Vinarmatha Rai, a 25-year-old engineer, says, "I live in a slightly remote area, and I have to commute at least for 5-10 minutes to access the nearest store or supermarket. Even if I go to a supermarket, it gets difficult to find all the items I need. But with online apps, I get anything at a tap. I prefer apps for their sheer convenience," she explained.

But 22-year-old artist Adithya Suresh admits that everything being available at fingertips has a flip side. "There was a time when I had to think twice before buying anything, whether it was something I simply craved or or really needed. I would consider if I could find a substitute at home or just suppress the craving. But with the rise of quick delivery apps, everything has changed. Now I can find anything I need, even specialty items that are not usually available."



The number of items that get home delivered within minutes continues to increase, with clothes, make-up, luxury items and gadgets getting added to the list. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Adithya, however, says that his parents have not made that transition. "My parents make a weekly trip to the hypermarket or stop by the Banashankari market when they are out, because for them, quality matters more and they are willing to put in the effort to get it. For my generation though, convenience seems to trump quality when it comes to shopping." Many senior citizens and middle-aged shoppers, *The Hindu* spoke to, said that they still prefer shopping at a physical store. Sumalatha M., a 55-year-old hotelier, said that she prefers shopping at the store over online any day. "Of course I do shop online too, but that is not something I do every day. Online shopping for me is only during emergencies. Shopping is one reason for me to get out of home, and amidst my busy schedule, it is like meditation. I will continue to step out and shop for as long as I can," she says.



Swiggy Instamart. REUTERS

Raghunandan Kumar, a senior citizen, said that living in apartment complexes has changed ways of shopping for many, but he prefers steeping out. "Apartments in a way spoil you. From basic needs like milk and vegetables to car wash, everything is at your doorstep."

"With online apps delivering to you no matter which floor you are on, no one prefers stepping out. Everyone in my family has become lazy because of this. Sometimes it gets annoying with so many deliveries coming in every half an hour. But when you step out and shop you know what you want exactly and you limit your expenses," he argues.

Provision stores

Abdul Salam, the manager of Shopwell supermarket in Turahalli, said that the store has seen moderate loss in its sales over the years, "Initially when we opened almost a decade ago, there were hardly any shops in this area. There were many developing apartments, and we were everyone's first choice. We delivered to multiple houses and our store would be busy with customers in the mornings and evenings," he said.

"However, over the last 3-4 years with the rise of online apps and fast delivery, we are seeing a slow but significant loss in our business. We do have our regular customers, but those who have a busy lifestyle prefer online shopping now," Abdul explained.

Similarly, Nataraj Kodihalli, a manager at Simpli Namdhari's near Ashoka Pillar, said that though there has been no major loss, the rise of online shopping is affecting supermarkets in some way or the other. "There are regular customers who keep a store running. But over the last five years, there has been a significant change in peoples' shopping preferences. Online platforms offer great discounts to people as most of their expenses are only on staff salaries and storage. However, supermarkets can not offer to give great discounts as they have to take care of salaries of staff, store rent, maintenance of store for customers like non-stop air conditioning, security and more," he said. Nataraj added that more than supermarkets it is the local kirana or provision stores that are affected the most.

Down to basics

Srinivas S., the owner of a provision store in Malleswaram, rued that increasingly it is senior citizens and working class who come to his shop these days. "Senior citizens or those from the lower middle class, like construction workers, come to my shop these days, because they do not how to use these delivery apps. I have reduced stock, and things that I sold three years ago are not in my store anymore. I stick to basic items like milk, eggs, vegetables, detergent, soaps, and some snacks and chocolates for children. My family is not financially dependent on this store, if we were, we would be on a major loss right now," he explained.

Dak Adalat on March 27

File photo of Chief Postmaster General's office at Palace Road.

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The Postmaster General's office for the South Karnataka Region in Bengaluru will be holding a *Dak Adalat* on March 27, 2025, at 11 a.m. This event will take place in the Conference Room of the Postmaster General's office in Bengaluru.

Individuals who wish to present grievances related to postal matters in the South Karnataka Region, which includes districts such as Chikkamagaluru, Davangere, Mysuru, and others, must submit the details of their complaints by March 21, 2025. The grievances should be addressed to The Assistant Director (M and T), O/o the Postmaster General, South Karnataka Region, III Floor, GPO Building, Bengaluru - 560001.

Alternatively, grievances can be emailed to: pg.karsk@indiapost.gov.in.

Language harmony versus language power

It makes sense for schools to offer an Indian language besides English. India is the second largest English-speaking country

ABOUT 500 WORDS

Suresh Menon

The average city Indian speaks three or four languages and has a nodding acquaintance with a couple more. GETTY IMAGES

My wife's maternal grandparents were a Rajput and a Malayali. Her mother married an Andhra, her sister a Punjabi. Their son's wife is Algerian, our son's is a Scot. That should make for a babel of voices at the dinner table if the generations ate together. Everyone spoke English, though. There were too those who learnt Sanskrit, French and German. Language is only one of the ways we communicate.

I don't know what difference second and third languages made to our lives. I struggled with Hindi in high school because I ran out of my small repertoire of Mohammed Rafi and Kishore Kumar songs to borrow from.

The average city Indian speaks three or four languages and has a nodding acquaintance with a couple more. Most of my fellow-students found second and third languages irrelevant to their future careers. But such things become clear only in later life. It is the choice that is important.

It makes sense for schools to offer an Indian language besides English. India is the second largest English-speaking country in the world, after all. It also seems appropriate to offer the local language, but that too can be seen as an imposition as professionals find jobs in different regions across the country. The children of a Punjabi on job transfer to Bengaluru are unlikely to find exams in Kannada easy. Perhaps there needs to be an option of 'Higher English'.

The late U.R. Ananthamurthy often said that everyone had a duty to learn the language of the state where they lived. This is true. But such knowledge comes from interaction with locals, not from being badly taught from poorly produced textbooks. Coercion usually provokes rejection.

Then there is the issue of qualified language teachers. It is easy to say you can learn any language, but that implies there is a qualified teacher of Bhojpuri, for instance, in Kerala, or Tamil in Ladakh. Our political style has borrowed from the theme in old Western movies: shoot first, regret later. Rules tend to precede an intelligent assessment of the pros and cons. Demonetisation is a good example.

If southern states are wary of Hindi imposition, they have the historical agitations against the

The late U.R. Ananthamurthy often said that everyone had a duty to learn the language of the state where they lived

move as reference points. In the 1960s, the DMK rode the popular opposition to possible Hindi imposition to come to power in Tamil Nadu. The politics of language is ever nestling beneath the politics of power in our country with its many languages. Forcing people to learn Hindi in the South is as ridiculous as forcing them to learn Tamil in the North. An unintended consequence of all this has been the language chauvinism in this region. In recent years, Kannada, the language of a gentle people, has seen such nativism. Language warriors have looked into the future and seen the gradual disappearance of their mother tongues and the consequent impact on their culture and tradition. For language is not only about communication. It is a key to history, identity, self-worth and community. Politicians often don't get this.

FROM THE ARCHIVES
The Hindu.

FIFTY YEARS AGO MARCH 17, 1975

Teachers Boycott Varsity Practical Exams

Bangalore: College and University teachers in the city boycotted the university practical examinations which commenced here on Saturday in response to the call given by the Bangalore University College Teachers Association. The secretary of the association, Mr. G. Basavana Gowda said the boycott would continue till a call for withdrawal was given by the association. The teachers are boycotting the examination in protest against the inaction of the Government on the question of the demands put forth by the Federation of College Teachers in Karnataka.

They include payment of salaries to employees of the aided colleges and implementation of UGC pay scales for all college teachers in the State.

72% of Income Spent on Food in Bengaluru

Bangalore: A survey of family expenditure on food, education, reading and recreation in Bangalore City conducted by postgraduate students of the statistics department of Bangalore University, has shown that the percentage of urban poor in Bangalore is less than the corresponding figure in the country.

Prof. B.R. Umarji, Project Director, the survey staff, told newsmen here on Friday that the random sample survey choosing 800 of three lakh households in the city had shown that the percentage of urban poor in Bangalore was about 35, compared to the national average of 50.

CITYBEATS

Group effort

ONGOING
A group show by the diploma students of Visual Arts at Swar Sangam in Kolkata is currently underway at the MKF Museum of Art, Bengaluru. Curated by Shirley Mathew, Hues 25 has still lifes, surreal and conceptual paintings on display. Swar Sangam was established in 1966 under the aegis of Birla Institution for Visual & Performing Arts.
MKF Museum of Art, Lavelle Road. Entry free, Mondays closed.

Meera's magnificence

MARCH 21
Sri Raja Rajeshwari KalaNiketan is celebrating 49 glorious years and will present the 49th Samanvay Arts Festival, in association with Academy of Music. Titled *Bhakti Shakti - The Power Of Devotion,* the event pays homage to the saint-poetess Meera Bai, on her 525th birth centenary with classical dance and music.
At Chowdaiah Memorial Hall, 5.45pm onwards. Call 8050209838.

Spring into flavours

ONGOING
Magnolia Bakery has launched a limited-edition of its Spring Specials. The selection includes lotus biscoff tres leches and spring cupcakes, that highlight the bright, fresh flavours of the season. While the lotus biscoff tres leches is a dreamy twist on a classic favourite, the cupcakes come in chocolate and vanilla flavours.
Available across all Magnolia outlets in the city.

Wild card Actor Gulshan Devaiah, with Anurag Kashyap in a still from *Bad Cop* and its poster. BHAGYA PRAKASH / SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

An unscripted journey to success

Dive into the intriguing world of actor Gulshan Devaiah where talent meets versatility

Shilpa Anandraj

He blends into each character he portrays so seamlessly that you forget it is him on screen and the character just takes over. Nothing is over or underplayed, nor does he ever come across as crass even when he rattles off the meanest dialogues.

This is none other than Gulshan Devaiah, who hails from Bengaluru, and has made a mark on the silver screen across borders. An actor with a penchant for the unconventional, he started off his acting career with Bengaluru-based Forum Three Theatre.

Be it playing a cop struggling to balance work and family in *Dahaad,* a gay man in *Badhaai Do* or the angry Bhavani in the all-out commercial *Galiyon Ki Rasleela Ramleela,* every role seems to fit Gulshan like a glove. The actor, who was in Bengaluru for Forum Three Theatre's golden jubilee celebrations, talked to **The Hindu** about acting, the craft and its business.

Edited excerpts:

Tell us about your stint in theatre and your journey with Forum Three.
I studied at Cluny Convent, Jalahalli, and the teachers and nuns there discovered I had an aptitude for the stage. Despite being working professionals, my mother Pushpa Devaiah enjoyed theatre and was active until she developed arthritis, while my father KA Devaiah, was deeply involved in music. So I grew up around rehearsals, and though I was a shy child, I felt free when I was on stage.

Later, I felt I should pursue acting and auditioned for Forum Three. I did my very first play with them almost two decades ago, which marked my association with them.

How did theatre help you as an actor?
Acting is a craft that needs to be developed and polished. For this, you have to have an aptitude and access to knowledge. I couldn't go to a drama school and NSD was out of reach for me.

I lacked courage to tell my parents I wanted to be an actor without training. Hence, I took to theatre and the more I acted, the more I realised there is an approach to every role – the way you stand, use your voice or imagination – all come into play.

When I got a chance to work with Forum Three, I attended workshops and gave it my best.

> I never thought of myself as a Karan Johar hero, but if I do get a chance, I will not decline it.
> **GULSHAN DEVAIAH**
> ACTOR

Your film career began with Anurag Kashyap and *That Girl In Yellow Boots'* international recognition. How has he influenced your film choices?
Anurag gave me a great opportunity when he was at the peak of his career. Not only was I was in the right place at the right time, but he also put a lot of trust in me as an actor. He will not tell you what to do, but working with him is like, 'I chose you for a role, now it's your responsibility to take this and make something out of it'.

It is rare for anyone to have that sort of confidence in you for your debut role. Working with him was rather comfortable though I was stressed about my first role. However, that created more opportunities for me.

Would your career have taken a different trajectory had it started off with a Karan Johar film?
I need some imagination to answer this one as it is quite speculative. My influences were Naseeruddin Shah, Manoj Bajpai, Irrfan Khan, and our idea of what a leading man was not the quintessential one, but more like a character leading man.

But, having said that, being a Karan Johar hero is a big accomplishment, and if I was offered a role in his film, I would gladly accept it. I never thought of myself as a Karan Johar hero, but if I do get a chance, I will not decline it. I also never saw myself in a Bhansali film, but I was and I embraced it.

Besides, when Karan Johar launches you, you grab eyeballs. It would have been a huge advantage. One can never deny that because getting noticed in this line of work is pretty challenging.

Were you ever bogged down by the requirement of chiselled good looks and six pack abs the job normally demands?
This used to be a trend, and at one point, everyone looked alike – trendy haircuts and tight clothes that accentuated their chest and biceps. I am not taunting anyone; this was my observation and I told myself I would not take that route, though I do enjoy gymming.

Very early on, in my theatre days, a senior told me an actor should have a neutral body type, so he or she can transform into anyone on screen. Besides, I was 30 when I began auditioning, so these ideas were already formed in my head and helped me in good stead.

Why do talented differently-abled Indian actors struggle to even get a chance on screen? If they do, they are reduced to silly comedy. What do you feel about inclusion in the world of cinema?
I don't think we have even realised that we can write diverse kinds of roles. This is a creative space that not many people are exploring as reality is quite different.

When we think of it as inclusion, I think we are under pressure as to how we depict them – will we be fair and so on. But once we normalise it and use creative tools, instead of representation, with creative writing we can make it normal and create stories. Isn't that the type of society we want? Change of perception may help.

Unlocking young minds

Siddharth Mahajan

Bengaluru-based children's author Vidya Varadarajan is on a mission to reignite a joy for reading in young minds. With her AKA Detective Series *The Mystery of the Graveyard Gold* and *The Missing Geometry Boxes*, she aims to engage the imagination of children in the nine-to-12 year bracket.

Vidya's books blend adventure, curiosity, and everyday experiences in an engaging manner. While her AKA Detective Series has already gained a dedicated readership, the third instalment, *The Mystery of the Disappearing Drones*, is set to be released in June.

Through her books, Vidya hopes to make reading fun and relatable for children, particularly those growing up in contemporary India. Set in familiar urban landscapes, the books resonate with young readers who see glimpses of their own lives in the characters and settings.

Born in the United States and raised in Chennai, Vidya's love for reading began early, inspired by an intensive reading and writing curriculum in her childhood. She recalls, "I grew up seeing my sister reading a lot of books; that is how my interest in reading grew."

Mission Bookworm
Vidya Vardarajan and her books.
SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Mystery novel series such as Nancy Drew and Hardy Boys fascinated her and shaped an early love for storytelling in her. Her family moved to India in 1986, and as she continued her education, Vidya found that writing became an essential part of her life. "I had a strong foundation and my writing skills helped me in many ways – from academics to expressing myself through fiction and essays."

Encouraged by her father, she pursued an MA in Communication at a time when cable TV was booming, leading her into the fields of advertising, copywriting, and later, digital marketing.

Target audience
But how did she step into the world of children's books?

"I was looking for books that would motivate my daughter to read when she was around nine years old. Somehow, books just didn't appeal to her; but I also understood that many books didn't reflect the world she lived in."

Vidya observed that while previous generations saw books as a window to another world, today's children – growing up with social media – lack books that truly mirror their own lives. "In India, we have many picture books, and quite a few address social issues and our culture. But I wanted to write stories that children could see themselves in."

With a firm belief in authenticity, Vidya ensures her books reflect the realities of modern Indian children. "Children in Bengaluru relate better when I mention the traffic and food, or use familiar names such as Aarav, Asha, or Karthik. I keep the character's names simple so children see themselves in the story."

Her AKA Detective Series was born from this vision, offering engaging mysteries that young readers could relate to.

Vidya's writing process is natural. "It starts with a story. I don't do much planning. For my first book, I wondered – what would happen if someone found gold? Where would the story go from there?" She focuses on keeping the mysteries logical yet exciting, and avoiding elements that come across as too far-fetched or simplistic.

Vidya hopes to make reading fun and relatable for children. Set in familiar urban landscapes, the books resonate with young readers who see glimpses of their own lives in the characters and settings.

Challenges and joys
Writing for children presents unique challenges, shares Vidya.

"I realise that sometimes I don't explain enough. My feedback often suggests adding more details so young readers fully understand what is happening. Balancing a fast-paced mystery without making it confusing is something I'm still working on."

At the same time, she views it as an opportunity to introduce children to new concepts. "While writing, I realised I had to explain certain things such as the working of QR codes and RFID technology. It happened organically, as my characters used them in the story and learned about them through research."

Ultimately, Vidya's goal is to make reading an enjoyable habit for children. "Reading is fun, and it is a lifelong habit that never lets you down. There is always another great book waiting for you."

The Mystery of the Graveyard Gold and The Missing Geometry Boxes by Vidya Vardarajan is available online and in book stores.

Fire at thermal power plant in Thoothukudi shuts down 3 units

Units I and II were affected by the fire and unit III was stopped as a precautionary measure, according to an official

The Hindu Bureau
THOOTHUKUDI

A major fire broke out at the Tuticorin Thermal Power Station (TTPS), leading to the temporary shutdown of units I, II, and III, each having a capacity of 210 MW.

The fire broke out in the cable gallery of the power supply system late on Saturday and spread to Unit II. The officials immediately alerted the Fire and Rescue Service Team, who began the firefighting operation.

Speaking to *The Hindu*, J. Radhakrishnan, Chairman and Managing Director of the Tamil Nadu Generation and Distribution Corporation (Tangedco) confirmed the temporary shutdown of the three units in the power station.

Some areas of the Tuticorin Thermal Power Station had to be broken open to douse the flames.
SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Rescue operations were progressing steadily despite the challenges caused by heavy smoke from the burning cables, he added.

After inspecting the site on Sunday, Thoothukudi Collector K. Elambahavath said around 50 fire safety personnel were involved in the operation to control the fire, with 10 water tenders from Thoothukudi and neighbouring districts being deployed.

Units I and II were affected by the fire and unit III was stopped as a precautionary measure, he noted.

He mentioned that two firefighters who suffered from suffocation due to inhalation of smoke were admitted to Thoothukudi Government Medical College and Hospital and their conditions were reported to be stable. Additionally, two ambulances were stationed at the site as a precautionary measure.

To completely extinguish the fire, some areas of the power station had to be broken open. Engineers of the power station and fire service personnel were working together on this task and officials expect the fire to be completely put out by the end of the day.

61 accounts 'promoting drug abuse' taken down

The Hindu Bureau
KASARAGOD

In a crackdown on online content that promotes drug use, the Excise and Cyber Police in Kerala have jointly removed 61 Instagram accounts allegedly spreading messages that glorified substance abuse.

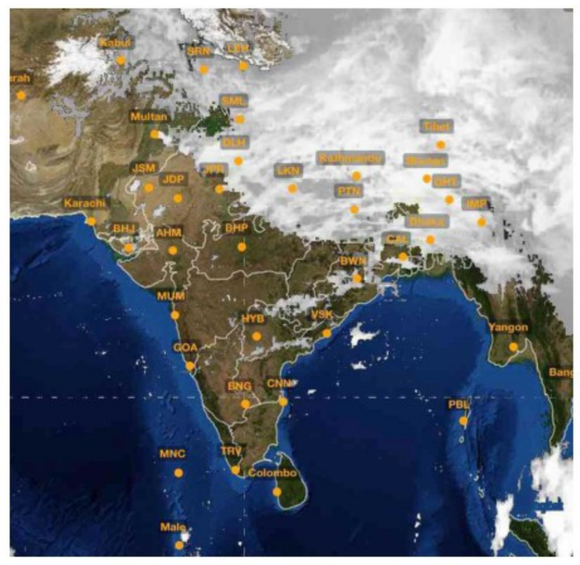
The accounts were allegedly actively sharing videos featuring dialogues and background music from popular movies, subtly normalising or glorifying drug consumption. The cyber operations chief of the Kerala Police, Ankit Ashokan, said a legal notice was issued to Instagram, leading to the removal of the accounts. "We take this matter seriously and have taken immediate action to address it. Legal notices have been issued to the relevant social media platforms, directing them to remove the Instagram profiles promoting drug use. These profiles have been made inaccessible in India. Additionally, stringent measures to prevent the spread of narcotic substance promotion has been implemented," he said.

"We will continue to monitor the situation and enforce legal action to prevent such activities."

The action was initiated based on the efforts of M.V. Shilparaj, a cybercadet under the Union Home Department, along with Srinivas Pai, an engineer from Kanhangad. This move gained further traction when the Excise Intelligence Bureau launched a district-wide surveillance.

WEATHERWATCH

Rainfall, temperature & air quality in select metros yesterday



TEMPERATURE DATA: IMD, POLLUTION DATA: CPCB, MAP: INSAT/IMD (TAKEN AT 17.00 HRS)

Forecast for Monday: Heavy rainfall at isolated places over Arunachal Pradesh. Heat wave to Severe Heat Wave Conditions very likely at many places over Odisha; Heat Wave Conditions very likely at isolated places over Jharkhand, Gangetic West Bengal, Telangana and Vidarbha.

CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN	CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN
Agartala	—	34.6	25.5	Kozhikode	—	37.0	28.0
Ahmedabad	—	36.7	22.5	Kurnool	—	40.6	24.2
Aizawl	—	34.6	17.4	Lucknow	—	36.6	21.8
Allahabad	—	34.6	22.4	Madurai	—	36.5	24.6
Bengaluru	—	34.0	17.9	Mangaluru	—	33.2	25.9
Bhopal	—	35.2	22.2	Mumbai	—	31.6	23.8
Bhubaneswar	—	36.8	24.4	Mysuru	—	—	—
Chandigarh	—	24.4	16.1	New Delhi	—	32.5	15.0
Chennai	—	33.6	24.4	Patna	—	32.2	23.2
Coimbatore	—	35.0	23.4	Port Blair	—	32.0	26.0
Dehradun	1.0	30.0	16.2	Puducherry	—	33.8	—
Gangtok	17.0	21.6	11.6	Pune	—	39.7	23.1
Goa	—	32.1	25.4	Raipur	—	38.8	24.9
Guwahati	0.8	31.3	19.4	Ranchi	—	36.6	20.6
Hubballi	—	39.0	20.0	Shillong	—	—	—
Hyderabad	—	39.2	22.7	Shimla	—	16.0	8.0
Imphal	0.6	29.2	17.6	Srinagar	11.0	12.2	4.0
Jaipur	—	31.4	21.0	Thiruvananthapuram	—	32.7	27.1
Kochi	—	32.6	27.8	Tiruchi	—	35.7	24.4
Kohima	—	22.2	13.5	Vijayawada	—	36.6	25.2
Kolkata	—	37.5	25.8	Visakhapatnam	—	32.5	24.8

(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)

Pollutants in the air you are breathing

CITIES	SO_2	NO_2	CO	PM2.5	PM10	CODE
Ahmedabad	.21	..—	51	... 142	95	
Bengaluru	.38	..12	28	 52	78	
Chennai	...6	6	30	 23	49	
Delhi	.14	..33	..3	... 132	...153	
Hyderabad	...5	109	..9	... 158	...114	
Kolkata	...3	..10	20	 81	82	
Lucknow	...9	..52	48	... 183	...159	
Mumbai	...6	..19	..9	 61	...130	
Pune	..—	..—	45	 61	93	
Visakhapatnam	.10	..53	37	 51	89	

Yesterday

In observation made at 4.00 p.m., Byrnihat, Meghalaya recorded an overall air quality index (AQI) score of 326 indicating an unhealthy level of pollution. In contrast, Puducherry recorded a healthy AQI score of 19.

Air Quality Code: Poor Moderate Good (Readings indicate average AQI)

SO_2: Sulphur Dioxide. Short-term exposure can harm the respiratory system, making breathing difficult. It can affect visibility by reacting with other air particles to form haze and stain culturally important objects such as statues and monuments.

NO_2: Nitrogen Dioxide. Aggravates respiratory illness, causes haze to form by reacting with other air particles, causes acid rain, pollutes coastal waters.

CO: Carbon monoxide. High concentration in air reduces oxygen supply to critical organs like the heart and brain. At very high levels, it can cause dizziness, confusion, unconsciousness and even death.

PM2.5 & PM10: Particulate matter pollution can cause irritation of the eyes, nose and throat, coughing, chest tightness and shortness of breath, reduced lung function, irregular heartbeat, asthma attacks, heart attacks and premature death in people with heart or lung disease

INBRIEF

Mappilapattu singer Faijas Uliyil dies in road accident

Mappilapattu singer Faijas Uliyil, 38, a native of Uliyil lost his life in a road accident near Punnad town in Iritty. The accident occurred around midnight when two cars collided, leaving five passengers injured. Faijas was trapped inside one of the vehicles, and local residents, along with the fire brigade from Iritty, worked to rescue him. Despite being rushed to a hospital in Mattannur, he succumbed to his injuries. His body has been shifted to the hospital morgue.

The police and the Motor Vehicles department are investigating the cause of the accident. The injured passengers are undergoing treatment.

Kerala to launch portal to address student migration

Amid the migration of students from Kerala and the absence of a mechanism to address the challenges being faced by them abroad, the Kerala government has decided to launch an exclusive interactive student migration portal for their safe and secure migration to foreign countries. The interactive student platform to be set up by NoRKA-Roots, a field agency under the Department of Non-Resident Keralites Affairs (NoRKA), with hands-on information on educational institutions in various countries will go live from the next financial year.

Key objectives of the portal are grievance redressal, with mechanisms to collect and resolve complaints, and providing pre-departure orientation materials and updates on relevant legislation in destination countries, said Ajith Kolassery, Chief Executive Officer of NoRKA-Roots.

'75% of fake doctors in TG are in urban areas like Hyderabad'

Siddharth Kumar Singh
HYDERABAD

Despite the common belief that quackery thrives in rural areas owingto a lack of qualified doctors, 75% of fake doctors in Telangana operate in urban centres like Hyderabad, where top government and private hospitals exist.

This contradiction was highlighted by experts at a debate titled 'Public Health? Immediate Need for Action Against Quackery' conducted by the Indian Medical Association (IMA)-Telangana on Sunday.

IMA Telangana president Dwarkanath Reddy stated that quackery has existed for decades, with individuals practising medicine without proper qualifications under the guise of Rural Medical Practitioners (RMPs) and Private Medical Practitioners (PMPs).

A writ petition filed in the Telangana High Court led to an order stating that only registered doctors can practice medicine, further underscoring that certification programmes for RMPs and PMPs should not be allowed.

Combing the beach

Work in progress: Preparations under way for the annual beach nourishment work to be taken up by the Visakhapatnam Port Authority in association with the Dredging Corporation of India on the R.K. Beach in Visakhapatnam on Sunday. V. RAJU

OU bans protests in academic spaces

The Hindu Bureau
HYDERABAD

The Osmania University, on March 13, issued a circular prohibiting agitations, protests and demonstrations within its departments, colleges, centres and administrative buildings.

According to the circular, several incidents of students and student groups entering the departments and other academic areas and staging demonstrations are causing disruption of administrative work and "is giving a wrong perception of the university to the society". The disruptions are also causing adverse effect on smooth functioning of the university besides security issues.

Accordingly, the circular noted prohibitions on trespassing, staging dharnas and agitations, raising slogans, preventing administrative authorities and staff from discharging their official duties, and using filthy language against university staff and authorities. The circular also noted serious action against violators as per law.

It advised that registered students with grievances first approach the officials concerned.

As follow-up, the university in a clarified response on Sunday stated that its circular does not impose a blanket ban on student protests at open spaces in the university.

"The restrictions apply exclusively to the academic and administrative spaces within college departments and administrative premises," it said.

Financial constraints will not deter welfare schemes, says Telangana Chief Minister

The Hindu Bureau
JANGAON

Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy reaffirmed his government's commitment to fulfilling electoral promises and implementing welfare schemes without compromise.

Addressing a public meeting at the 'Praja Palana Pragati Bata' programme at Shivunipalli village near Station Ghanpur in the district on Sunday, the Chief Minister emphasised that despite inheriting a huge debt burden, his government is determined to drive development across the state.

Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy waving to the crowd at a public meeting at Shivunipalle near Station Ghanpur Assembly constituency in Jangaon on Sunday.

Warangal, he said, holds historical significance and will be developed as a major city, second only to Hyderabad, and ₹6,500 crore has been allocated for combined Warangal district's development, with ₹800 crore specifically earmarked for Station Ghanpur constituency.

He virtually inaugurated projects worth ₹630.27 crore, including Young India Integrated Residential School in Konayachalam village at ₹200 crore and a new degree college in Ghanpur at ₹5.5 crore.

A 100-bed hospital at ₹45.5 crore and an integrated divisional-level office complex for ₹26 crore highlight the administration's efforts in healthcare and governance.

The second phase of the Devadula irrigation project at ₹148.76 crore, along with canal works for RS Ghanpur, aims to enhance water resources.

Housing projects have also been prioritised, with 512 Indiramma houses sanctioned at ₹25.6 crore and additional initiatives across multiple mandals.

Infrastructure remains a key focus, with rural road renovations, road widening projects, and construction of Banjara Bhavan. Power supply in the region is set for a boost with the establishment of multiple 33/11 KV substations across all villages in the State.

Mr. Reddy distributed a cheque of ₹92.74 crore to women's groups under the interest-free loan waiver scheme, and ₹100 crore under bank linkage assistance.

He praised local MLA Kadiyam Srihari and Warangal MP Kadiyam Kavya for their efforts to develop their respective constituencies.

Forest Department fails to tranquillise injured tiger

The Hindu Bureau
IDUKKI

The Forest Department's mission to tranquillise an injured tiger at Granby, near Vandiperiyar, in Idukki was unsuccessful after officials failed to trace the animal on Sunday.

According to the Forest department officials, the tiger, which was under the surveillance of the department till Saturday evening, moved to another area on Saturday night. Though sniffer dogs and drones were used, the officials failed to trace the tiger. The department has decided to postpone the mission to Monday.

Kottayam Divisional Forest Officer (DFO) N. Rajesh said the department will install two more cages at Hillash and Arnakkal to trap the animal.

"The tiger sustained a serious injury in its left hind limb and is unable to hunt or travel long distance. We suspect the animal has moved to a nearby area and is hopeful of tranquillizing it on Monday," said the official. "A team, led by the Erumely range officer, is camping in the area to trace the movements of the tiger. The department will provide protection to the tea estate workers and schoolchildren till a solution is found," he said.

Meanwhile, the local residents alleged that the forest officials did not take efforts to tranquillize the tiger, which was camping in a tea estate near Granby on Saturday.

'Will expose irregularities of BRS regime in Assembly'

The Hindu Bureau
JANGAON

Intensifying his attack on Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) president and former Chief Minister K. Chandrashekhar Rao, Telangana Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy once again challenged the former to a debate on issues pertaining to the irrigation sector, including projects undertaken during the BRS rule.

Mr. Reddy on Sunday also vowed to expose irregularities that occurred during the BRS rule, in the Assembly on March 19 or 20 during the ongoing Budget session.

Terror on the train

Pakistan must solve Balochistan's problems, not blame outsiders

The attack on the Jaffar Express, on March 11, in a mountainous region of Balochistan, is one of the most daring attacks by the Baloch Liberation Army (BLA) in recent times. The BLA's move, demanding the release of Baloch militants from jails, was met with a swift military response from Pakistan. According to the Pakistani authorities, 354 passengers were rescued after a 36-hour long stand-off in which 26 security personnel and passengers and 33 rebel fighters were killed. Pakistan has accused its "eastern neighbour" (India) and "Afghan handlers" of helping the Baloch separatists. But beneath such allegations lie Pakistan's growing internal security vulnerabilities. The BLA, now the most powerful separatist group from the restive Balochistan province, has been carrying out a host of attacks. In November 2024, it claimed a suicide bombing at a train station in Quetta, the provincial capital, that killed at least two dozen people. It has also targeted Chinese workers in repeated attacks in the province. And with each attack, the Pakistani military has responded with heavy force. But it seems clueless on how to deter the attacks and bring stability to the region.

While visiting Quetta after the Jaffar Express attack, Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif made a rare acknowledgement that the lack of development in Balochistan was an obstacle in eliminating terrorism. Baloch separatists have long argued that the Pakistani state, dominated by Punjabis and Sindhis, has historically ignored the Balochis. The BLA and other Baloch nationalist groups accuse the federal government of plundering Balochistan's resources, and blame security agencies for the forced disappearances, torture and extra-judicial killings of Baloch civilians and rebels. Pakistan's reliance on military campaigns in Balochistan has only reinforced the narrative of the separatists – of the province being treated differently by Islamabad-Rawalpindi. Pakistan has blamed India and the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (before the 2021 Taliban takeover) for helping Baloch rebels. It also welcomed the return of the Taliban to Kabul as a moment of Afghanistan "breaking the shackles of slavery". But it was a bonhomie that did not last. Today, Pakistan says Baloch separatists and the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) are operating from safe havens in Taliban-run Afghanistan. Together, the TTP and Baloch rebels pose grave security challenges to Pakistan at a time when it is battling economic uncertainty and political instability. But Balochistan is a clear example that a military response alone does not bring peace and stability. If Pakistan wants to calm its restive regions, it should address the political and economic problems that fuel instability and insurgency.

Rare success

ICC is still dependent on political interests to pursue its work

The arrest of former President of the Philippines Rodrigo Duterte on a warrant issued by the International Criminal Court (ICC) marks a rare success in the ICC's attempts to make senior political figures, especially those who have held or still hold public office, accountable for their crimes. However, it has to be acknowledged that only a set of favourable circumstances led to Mr. Duterte's arrest, and his being flown to The Hague: the warrant was executed by the government headed by President Ferdinand Marcos Jr., and the decision may have been the fallout of his differences with Vice-President Sara Duterte, Mr. Duterte's daughter who is embroiled in impeachment proceedings. ICC warrants invariably remain unexecuted, unless national governments cooperate with the ICC, a feature that often delays and stymies most ICC prosecutions. Mr. Duterte has been accused of "the crime against humanity of murder". The reference is to his 'war on drugs', a campaign of state-backed killing when he was Mayor of Davao City, and later President. The ICC is investigating the situation between 2011 and 2019, as he formally pulled his country out of ICC membership. However, the Pre-Trial Chamber has determined that despite the country not being a state-party now, it has jurisdiction to try crimes committed by individuals during the time the Philippines was a party.

The ICC was created by the Rome Statute in response to a need to have a permanent court, instead of ad hoc tribunals, for war crimes and crimes against humanity. It has no power of enforcement and is dependent on the national interests of big powers. It has often been accused of focusing on Africa, moving mainly against warlords and leaders in conflict zones. Warrants against leaders such as Vladimir Putin and Benjamin Netanyahu are seldom executed. In addition, some member-states have also expressed an inability to execute arrest warrants when those individuals visit their countries, while some leaders avoid visiting countries of state-parties. Added to this is the open hostility of the United States that frequently threatens the ICC with punitive measures if it moves against its nationals or allies. Fortunately, the ICC still exists as an international judicial institution mainly because it tries only individuals and not states. It has also rendered some significant verdicts on its own jurisdiction, the most important being the ruling in respect of Palestine that it can order investigations into crimes committed by nationals of both state-parties and non-state-parties on the territory of a state-party. Thus, a mere refusal by a country to ratify the Rome Statute or not being a party to it may not be relevant to any decision by the ICC to investigate and prosecute any individual.

The challenges of public health education in India

The decision by the United States to withdraw from the World Health Organization (WHO) and drastically reduce the scale of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) is one that has sent shock waves through the aid and public health world. This move has disrupted essential health-care services in many low- and middle-income countries. However, India has been largely unaffected, as international aid accounts for just 1% of its total health expenditure. Nevertheless, the cessation of such funding threatens to further shrink an already constrained public health development sector, which relies heavily on international support. More importantly, this development directly impacts the public health job market, reducing opportunities for thousands who are pursuing their Master of Public Health (MPH) and similar postgraduate courses.

Public health plays a critical role in shaping a nation's well-being and health-care delivery. The Constitution of India, through Article 47, underlines the state's responsibility to improve public health care. Public health is a specialised field that requires specific knowledge and skills to effectively address people's health needs. There is an urgent need for a dedicated workforce in India trained in public health, a fact that was very starkly realised during the COVID-19 pandemic. Beyond government systems, such a workforce is essential for civil society organisations, academic institutions, and research organisations engaged in public health.

Dr. Vikash R. Keshri

is a senior public health and health policy expert and an Adjunct Senior Lecturer at the School of Population Health, University of New South Wales, Sydney, Australia

The evolution of training and jobs in India

Though the surge in public health education in India is relatively recent, its history dates to the colonial era. In the early days, public health was largely embedded within medical teaching. This narrow approach persisted despite the establishment of the All India Institute of Hygiene and Public Health, Kolkata in 1932 and the subsequent inclusion of preventive and social medicine – later known as community medicine – as an essential part of medical education. Specialists in community medicine, well-trained in public health provided public health services and met human resource needs in this field. However, their numbers were limited, and they were often engaged in medical teaching. Many students pursued MPH courses abroad in countries such as Australia, the European Union, the United Kingdom and the U.S. Yet, the supply of public health professionals remained constrained. Recognising the growing need and demand, MPH institutions and teaching expanded in India.

The number of institutions offering MPH and related courses in India has grown rapidly. Currently, over 100 institutions offer master's level courses in public health, whereas in 2000, there was only one. This expansion coincided with the launch of the National Rural Health Mission (NRHM) in 2005, which opened public health system roles to non-medical public health specialists. A wide range of institutions, from social science faculties to community medicine departments within medical institutions, have begun offering MPH courses. However, after an initial surge in demand, government recruitment for public health specialists plateaued, while the number of schools, programmes, and graduates continued to rise. As a result, securing jobs has become increasingly difficult for graduates.

> The key issue is the mismatch between supply and demand, with shrinking job opportunities and the dominance of the private sector

Compounding this issue are challenges such as the lack of standardised training, insufficient practical learning opportunities, faculty shortages, and varied curricula that inadequately prepare students for real-world public health challenges. In addition, institutions offering public health courses are unevenly distributed, with large and populous States such as Assam, Bihar and Jharkhand, and many smaller and hilly States, having none or only a limited number of seats.

Hurdles graduates face, issues in education

The foremost challenge is the mismatch between supply and demand, with limited and shrinking job opportunities for graduates. Today, entry-level positions in public health, such as research or programme assistants, attract a very high number of applications, with a significant proportion of candidates being eligible. The success rate remains exceptionally low, with only a few positions available. Moreover, the shrinking of public health roles and institutions within the public system has further limited job prospects. Efforts to establish public health management cadres in States have been hindered by multiple factors.

In recent times, the changing landscape of health care, marked by the growing dominance of the private sector in public health, further restricts employment opportunities. The private sector prioritises hospital and business management professionals over public health specialists. With limited opportunities in both the public and private sectors, the research and development sectors remain the primary employers for graduates. However, these sectors rely largely on foreign grants, and India is no longer one of the priority countries for such international funders. Similarly, the development sector is constrained by limited funding, which is expected to worsen further due to recent decisions in the U.S. The national research and health development funding remains in its early development and is significantly underfunded. Thus, the job scarcity for public health professionals continues and can exacerbate further.

Beyond job scarcity, there are concerns about the quality of MPH education. The rapid spread of public health schools has led to intense competition to attract students, often at the expense of compromising admission standards. Many students enrol in these courses without a clear understanding of the field or passion needed to thrive in this field. Further, public health faculty often lack adequate training and real-world experience. The absence of a standardised curriculum and clear outcome measures, despite the Health Ministry's model course framework further exacerbates concerns. In India, MPH courses are currently not mandatorily regulated by any regulatory body. Neither the National Medical Commission (NMC) nor umbrella organisations such as the University Grants Commission (UGC) oversee MPH training. In the absence of these quality measures, the overall quality of graduates is also impacted.

Approaches to consider

To address these challenges, a multi-pronged approach is required. The most urgent priority is to create public health jobs at all levels, from primary care to State and national health systems. In most developed countries with established public health education systems, governments are the largest employers of public health professionals. Similarly, establishing a dedicated public health cadre within State governments would be a significant step. This would not only create employment but also strengthen public health systems.

Next, a robust regulatory mechanism must be introduced by constituting a dedicated regulatory body or a specialised public health education division within existing regulatory agencies such as the NMC or UGC. This department, led by public health experts, should be responsible for setting curriculum standards and minimum training requirements while allowing room for institutional innovation, given that public health is a dynamic and evolving discipline. Moreover, public health training in all institutions must be closely integrated with practical learning opportunities within public health systems. There is a need to foster the growth of public health institutions in States where there are none or only a limited number. The emerging global situation calls for more national action and the building of local ecosystems for sustainable development in health.

The views expressed are personal

From insurance-driven private health care to equity

As the world's largest democracy, India has long been committed to 'Health for All' under the World Health Organization's Universal Health Coverage (UHC) framework, which prioritises primary health care (PHC) and to reduce out-of-pocket expenditure (OOPE). India's evolving health policies have shaped Budget allocations and influenced health-care service and delivery. With the Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB-PMJAY) addressing OOPE, there is now greater scope to strengthen public health systems, especially primary health care. This insurance-based programme reduces OOPE by covering hospitalisation, surgeries, and procedures at the tertiary level, but sidelines the UHC principle of primary health care. Despite improving financial protection, it discourages primary health-care use, weakens public health infrastructure, and strengthens market-driven private health care.

Pooja Sagar

is a researcher in the history of medicine and the oral histories of health and medical practices

Aruna Bhattacharya

leads urban health academics, research and practice at the IIHS School of Human Development. She is a current fellow of the WomenLift Health India cohort

Neglect of primary health-care systems

A robust PHC system reduces the burden on secondary and tertiary care, and ensures cost-effective health care. When health is recognised as a citizen's right, the state must ensure accessible and affordable PHC, whether publicly provided or well-supported. However, AB-PMJAY's hospitalisation-based reimbursement shifts the focus away from preventive and community-based health care, increases long-term costs and reliance on private hospitals, and fails to reduce OOPE. This contradicts the Bhore Committee's vision of strong primary health care, with a pyramid-shaped health system tapering to secondary and tertiary care.

Since its launch in 2018, the Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission dashboard reports the issuance of over 36 crore Ayushman cards and the empanelment of more than 31,000 hospitals. Although health is a state subject, PM-JAY reroutes funds to private insurance players, limiting state control. The 2025 Budget allocates ₹9,406 crore to AB-PMJAY, which is ₹2,000 crore more than the previous year, boosting privatisation and insurance-based financing. It remains unclear how much it will help reduce health expenditures for marginalised groups or support primary health care to lower out-of-pocket expenses for Below Poverty Line cardholders.

> The government must invest in preventive, community-based care that is accessible to all

Budget, privatisation, insurance overhaul

The health budget allocates ₹95,957.87 crore to the Department of Health and Family Welfare and ₹3,900.69 crore to the Department of Health Research. The Budget prioritises medical digital infrastructure and medical education expansion over PHC. The National Health Mission, vital for grass-root health care, receives a declining share, signalling the state's gradual retreat from its universal health-care responsibility and shifting the burden onto private players. This affects citizens, as insurance schemes merely consolidate capital at the public's expense.

Additionally, significant changes in the insurance sector include raising the foreign direct investment (FDI) cap in the insurance sector from 74% to 100%, following a previous increase from 49% to 74% in 2021. This aims to improve India's low insurance penetration, especially in rural areas, attract more players into the insurance market, and achieve "Insurance for All" by 2047. The Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI) expects this to bring capital and expand coverage.

Policy changes raise concerns for India's informal workforce and marginalised urban populations. With the informal sector comprising a significant portion of the workforce, the lack of universal health coverage leaves millions without health security. The government has yet to outline how it will protect these vulnerable populations. Insurance illiteracy further complicates access, forcing many migrant and non-literate working classes to rely on middlemen. Without strict private sector regulation, OOPE is likely to increase due to inflated medical costs and uncovered consumables. Coverage for Accredited Social Health Activist (ASHA) workers and grass-root health-care providers remains uncertain. Compounding these issues is outdated data –the last Census was in 2011, and the Periodic Labour Force Survey was in 2020-21 – hindering efficient allocation and utilisation of social protection schemes.

Lessons from global models

Global experiences warn against an over-reliance on private insurance. In the U.S., insurance-driven pricing has led to skyrocketing health-care costs, widening inequalities, and limiting access for uninsured individuals. Public outcry over claim denials highlights the risks of corporate control over health care.

India can learn from countries such as Thailand (tax funded universal coverage scheme) and Costa Rica's Mandatory insurance scheme (Caja Costarricense de Seguro Social). Both rely on general tax revenue, strong public health investments, and regulated private insurance, prioritising primary care and community-based services.

As India navigates urban and health-care transitions shaped by the Budget and policy, it must reassess priorities. Instead of disproportionately favouring tertiary private health care through insurance models, the government must invest in preventive, community-based care that is accessible to all. Policies must address the health-care needs of informal workers, the unemployed, migrants, and vulnerable populations, especially with rising climate-related health risks.

Comprehensive public health benefit packages, cost-control mechanisms, and programmes to reduce OOPE are essential for achieving UHC. Safeguards must be in place to prevent private insurance from driving up health-care costs, ensuring India's commitment to 'Health for All' remains more than just a slogan.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The real election issues

The nation should thank the former Chief Election Commissioner, T.N. Seshan, for having introduced the voter ID card, among other reforms. That this important card greatly arrested the rigging of ballot papers is something we must thank him for. However, linking the voter ID card with Aadhaar (Page 1, March 16) will be a colossal waste of time. When each identification document is designed for a specific purpose, why cause confusion? Instead, the Election Commission of India (ECI) should focus strongly on allegations of manipulations in voter lists. The seeds of doubt have been sown in the minds of people and it is for the ECI to dispel these doubts. The challenges before the ECI are huge and it must ensure that it safeguards its reputation.

Balasubramaniam Pavani,
Secunderabad

America's visa curbs

There seems to be much turmoil in the United States ("U.S. planning visa curbs on 41 nations", March 16). Such nativist policies if implemented will certainly not augur well for the American economy. People frequenting the U.S. for better educational prospects or for tourism contribute to its GDP significantly. Seemingly, in this great urge to foil illegal migration, the U.S. President is causing many problems. The U.S. ought to shun its strong-arm tactics and adopt a more inclusive policy that counterpoises national security concerns with the principles of globalisation — namely, the free movement of goods and people.

Aanya Singhal,
Noida, Uttar Pradesh

Letters emailed to letters@thehindu.co.in must carry the postal address and the full name.

Tackling the problem of nutrition

Priyadarshini Singh

Fellow, Centre for Social and Economic Progress. Views are personal

While health was not a priority for Budget 2025, it seems that nutrition is. In the coming financial year, two Union government schemes will receive higher allocations – Saksham Anganwadi and Poshan 2.0. But will this fix India's nutrition challenge?

Nutrition in India is not just about food insecurity, but also about dietary habits shaped by culture, caste, and gender relations. Only one aspect of the nutrition challenge receives most of the policy focus – malnutrition among women and children. Women outside of the reproductive age, men, and senior citizens rarely figure in national nutrition policy discussions. More importantly, we ignore diabetes, hypertension, and other lifestyle-induced non-communicable diseases which are really another manifestation of under nutrition. One type of nutrition deficiency is because some people just don't have enough to eat and the other type is because people are not eating sufficient nutritionally rich food. The outcomes are damning in unique ways.

India has among the world's highest share of malnourished children and anaemic women. According to the National Family Health Survey-5, 36% of children under five are stunted and a meagre 11% who are breastfed between the ages of 6 months and 23 months receive an adequate diet. Fifty-seven percent of women in the 15-49 age group are anaemic. There is a rise in the share of those with diabetes, hypertension, and other such lifestyle-diet induced non-communicable diseases (NCDs). 24% of women and 23% men in India are overweight or obese and 14% take medicines for diabetes.

A comprehensive agenda

Poshan 2.0 and Saksham Anganwadi offer more of the same solutions – take-home rations, supplementary foods, tracking of severe and acute malnutrition cases, iron and folic acid tablets etc. With Poshan 2.0, there is additional focus on aspirational districts and the north-eastern region. But these schemes reinforce the idea that malnutrition is a problem only in certain parts of India and only in certain segments of the population. Instead, what we need is a comprehensive nutrition agenda in which nutrition is identified as a public health problem that impacts people across the social strata.

A comprehensive agenda would recognise the nutrition needs of different segments of the society. It must consist of: first, a clear identification of nutrition needs beyond reproductive and child health; second, a broad set of solutions, particularly rooted in the local food systems; and third, a clear identification of locally embedded facilities to deliver nutrition services. We need most work in identifying local institutional linkage for the agenda. Who will implement this in our neighbourhoods every day? The clear answer is: the health and wellness centres (HWCs).

At present, we provide supplementary nutrition for pregnant and lactating mothers and young children through take-home rations, iron and folic acid tablets for adolescent girls at Anganwadi centres (AWCs); and mid-day meals for children in schools. We need to systematically expand the nutrition-focused activities to other segments of the population and involve HCWs and ACWs. The mix of nutrients which goes in the take-home ration for poor women is relevant for pregnant women from all strata of society. Food items which use locally available low-cost, nutrient-dense produce need to be emphasised for the middle classes too, which consume sugar-laden, fibre-poor packaged goods.

For HWCs to implement this agenda, they need to be in sufficient numbers to cover the entire population. Each of them has to have a detailed set of nutrition services covering the entire catchment population. At present, the spread of HWCs is lopsided. Rural areas seem to have them in excess when compared to urban ones. And within rural areas, some areas have a higher concentration of HWCs.

HEALTH & GOVERNANCE

Nutrition services in HWCs are limited. HWCs are supposed to provide nutrition advice to pregnant women and lactating women, adolescents and children, the elderly population, and those recuperating from disease, disaster and trauma. But these are not implemented consistently or systematically.

We also need dedicated staff to provide nutrition services at the HWCs. In the existing design, nutrition is a tiny part of the responsibilities of the multi-purpose worker.

Factors for success

The success of the nutrition agenda will depend on two factors: engaging with local elites; and linking nutrition practices with local cuisines. Professor Prerna Singh at Brown University demonstrates in her research on small pox vaccination that there was significant variation in the uptake of vaccination during the 1950s among equally placed countries such as India and China. Some got their population vaccinated earlier and faster than others. Those that did were countries where the vaccination interventions were publicly owned by local elites and connected with local health practices and ideas.

India is a rapidly transforming society. We have to push further with the HWC approach of imagining health as wellbeing and not just an absence of illness. A locally owned, comprehensive nutrition agenda for all strata of society delivered by the primary health system is a first step in this direction.

A comprehensive nutrition agenda, not targeted intervention, will address malnutrition

Should cancer be a notifiable disease?

An effective approach would be to expand the National Cancer Registry Programme

C. Aravinda

Time and again, there have been calls to designate cancer as a notifiable disease in India. While some argue that this would enhance surveillance and treatment, the Union government has resisted the move, saying the practice is to notify only infectious diseases and that cancer is non-communicable and not infectious.

Recent shifts in disease notification policies raise questions about whether this reasoning still holds. In 2024, the government asked all the States to make snakebites a notifiable disease. This trend is not unique to India. In 1995, the U.S. became the first country to list lead poisoning as a notifiable disease, establishing a precedent for the surveillance of non-communicable diseases. This evolution in public health policy forces a critical examination of whether cancers warrant notification for surveillance in India.

The primary purpose of disease notification is to ensure that contagious diseases are kept under check. Notification of infectious diseases is a legal mandate and compels physicians to report designated diseases to public health authorities, failing which they could face legal consequences. Unlike infectious diseases, cancer does not pose an immediate threat to public health through direct transmission and sudden deaths. It is a diverse group of diseases rather than a single condition, and its detection often requires complex diagnostic procedures. Proponents of making cancer notifiable argue that mandatory reporting could enhance early detection and resource allocation.

However, there are fundamental issues with this approach. First, cancer is not a single-point diagnosis. Arguably, cancers as a disease are more diverse ranging from benign to malignant. Notifiability triggers rapid containment measures, whereas cancer requires long-term management rather than emergency interventions. Legal obligations on physicians could impose a burden that does not translate into improved patient care.

HEALTH & GOVERNANCE

India's National Cancer Registry Programme (since 1982) functions as a data collection mechanism, compiling crucial information on the demographics of cancer patients, cancer identification including type, stage, and morphology, the timing of diagnosis and staging at the time of detection, treatment details such as chemotherapy, radiation, and surgery, and follow-up and survival outcomes. The NCRP includes hospital-based registries, which collect data from cancer-treating hospitals, and population-based registries, which capture cancer incidence in a defined geographic area.

There are 269 hospital-based and 38 population-based registries as of 2022, which is insufficient. Hospital-based registries should be expanded to every cancer-treating hospital, including all district headquarters hospitals. Similarly, population-based registries should be established in every district, ensuring at least one unit per district for comprehensive nationwide cancer surveillance. Rather than legally mandating notification, strengthening existing cancer registries is a more thorough and effective alternative.

Second, making cancer a notifiable disease also raises privacy concerns. Notifiability generally does not account for privacy because disease notification is meant to preserve public health over individual confidentiality. There is still stigma attached to cancer.

Many State public health acts still contain provisions that give sweeping powers to local authorities during a health emergency. While much of this has been rendered toothless over time, the legal precedent remains. Introducing cancer into such a framework could further deepen the reluctance among patients to come forward for diagnosis and treatment, making it counterproductive and potentially deterring patients from seeking timely treatment due to stigma and discrimination. The World Health Organization advocates mainly cancer registries, which mention notification as an option at the individual level alone.

An effective approach would be to expand the NCRP to ensure comprehensive data collection at all tertiary and district hospitals. Improving cancer screening initiatives would ensure early detection. Strengthening reporting mechanisms without legal mandates would allow oncologists and healthcare providers to contribute accurate data voluntarily rather than reporting under duress. Mandatory notification remains an apt approach suited for single-point, outbreak-prone diseases. For cancer, a well-structured registry system, bolstered by wider hospital participation, including private hospitals and robust follow-up mechanisms, offers a far superior solution to improving cancer surveillance in India.

Dr. C. Aravinda is an academic and public health physician. Views are personal

A U-turn that has left a void in Ukraine's defence against Russia

The U.S., which is the lead supplier of Ukraine's warplanes, sensors, missiles, armoured vehicles, and air defence, has changed its position in the UNGA

DATA POINT

Nitika Francis

On February 24, for the first time, the U.S. voted against the peaceful resolution of the Russia-Ukraine war. This vote, along with its decision on March 4 to pause military aid, shows a marked shift in the U.S.'s policy towards Ukraine, which has depended heavily on it throughout the war for its military needs.

Among the 176 member countries of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) that participated in the draft resolution, Advancing a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in Ukraine, 93 voted in favour, while 65 countries, including India, abstained from voting.

Only 18 countries voted against the resolution. The U.S. was joined by Russia, North Korea, and Belarus, countries with which it has never once agreed on Ukraine-related decisions. Its decision clashed with those of countries that had aligned with the U.S. in over 80% of the UNGA resolutions in the past, including Canada, Britain, Australia, and France. **Chart 1** shows the share (in %) of countries which voted in favour of Ukraine and against it in UN resolutions regarding the country.

The U.S.'s U-turn has implications for Ukraine, which is still trying to defend itself against Russian invasion. Ever since Russia's initial occupation of the Crimean Peninsula in 2014, over 40 countries have extended financial, humanitarian, and military aid to Ukraine. The U.S.'s total contribution of €114 billion is the largest since the start of Russia's full-scale invasion in 2022. It remains the leading donor in military, humanitarian, and financial aid to Ukraine in this period. European nations have together contributed €132 billion.

Chart 2 shows the top five countries that have donated military aid to Ukraine since 2022 (in %). The U.S. has donated €64 billion, more than half of all the military aid received by Ukraine during the war. The U.K. is at a distant second, having donated about 10% of the total amount.

In fact, backed mainly by the U.S., Ukraine became the largest importer of major arms in the world in the 2020-24 period, a nearly 100-fold rise compared with the figures of 2015-19. U.S. military aid has given Ukraine some vital arms and ammunition, especially missiles, which Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said "will do all the talking".

Chart 3 shows the U.S.'s share in Ukraine's imports across various categories of weapons since the start of the war. The U.S. supplies over 70% of the aircraft used by Ukraine in the war and leads in providing weapons across most categories, including sensors (63%), missiles (55%), armoured vehicles (41%), and air defence systems (28%). However, it does not hold the largest share in artillery, which is primarily supplied by Poland, or in engines, where Germany accounts for about 40% of the supply. The arms supply data includes arms supplied and arms that countries have committed to supplying.

U.S. President Donald Trump's announcement that the U.S. will be pausing military aid following his clash with Mr. Zelenskyy at the White House comes at a critical time. The outnumbered Ukrainian military forces and civilians continue to suffer casualties.

Chart 4 shows the number of civilian fatalities and injuries in Ukraine per month since February 24, 2022. While the number of fatalities, which peaked in March 2022, has decreased since the beginning of the war, an average of about 172 civilians have been killed in Ukraine every month over the past year. A total of 12,605 civilians have been killed since February 2022.

Left high and dry

The data for the charts were sourced from United Nations, OHCHR, and Kiel Institue for the World Economy

Tensions escalate: A demonstrator holds signs during a protest outside the U.S. Embassy as President Trump holds talks regarding a possible ceasefire, amid Russia's attack on Ukraine, in Kyiv, Ukraine March 15, 2025. REUTERS

Chart 1: Share (in %) of countries that voted in favour of Ukraine and against it in UN resolutions regarding the country. Abstained How the U.S. voted

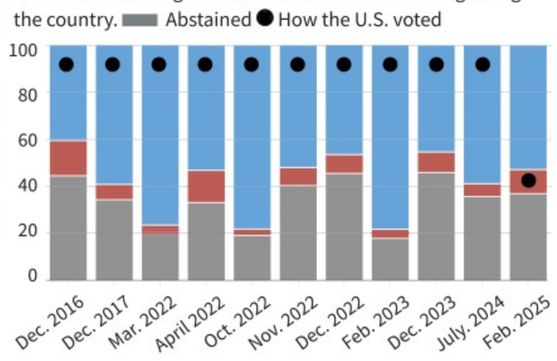


Chart 2: Top five countries that have donated military aid to Ukraine since 2022 (as a % of total contribution)

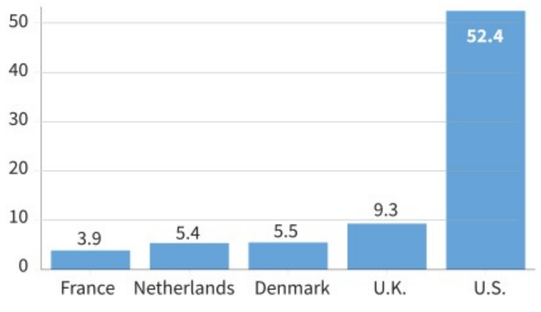


Chart 3: U.S.'s share (in %) in Ukraine's imports across various categories of weapons since the start of the war

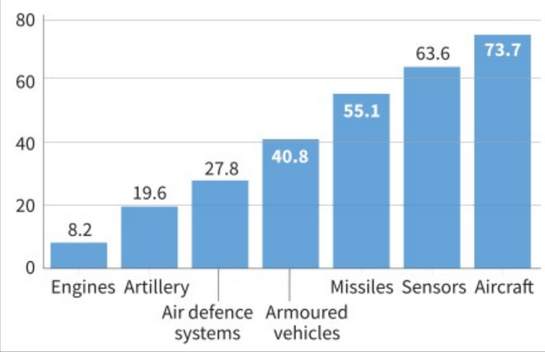
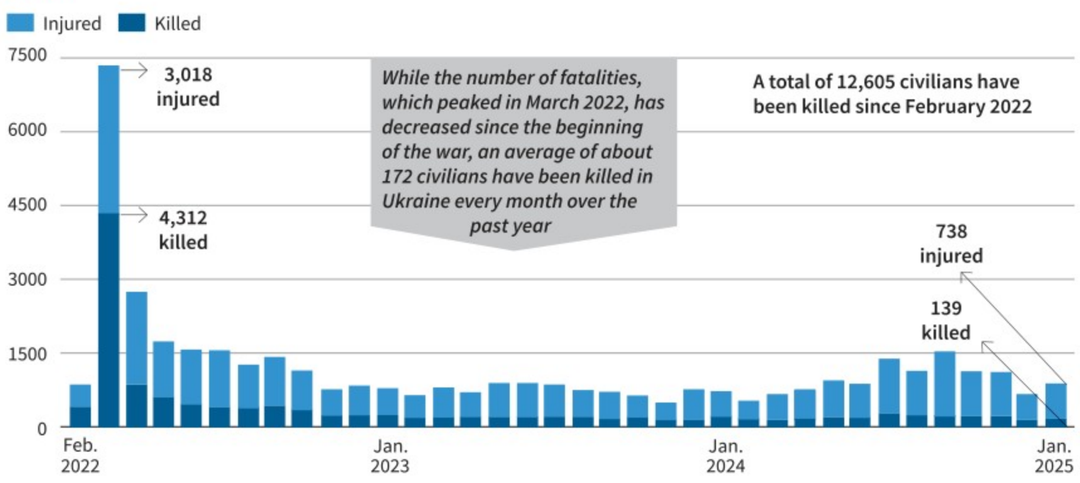


Chart 4: Number of civilian fatalities and injuries in Ukraine per month since February 24, 2022



FROM THE ARCHIVES

The Hindu.

FIFTY YEARS AGO MARCH 17, 1975

Big thermal stations only in Sixth Plan

New Delhi, March 16: The super thermal power stations, the Finance Minister spoke about it his budget speech are for the Sixth Plan, enquiries reveal.

Mr. C. Subramaniam settled the controversy over India opting for 500 mw coal-fired stations by saying that the Government was actively examining the establishment of 'a number' of such stations at the pit heads of major coal fields. His statement was in the nature of a policy communication rather than a portent of early action, it is learnt.

Although the new orientation towards a budget emphasis on food and energy has made this favourable policy decision possible, there is a lot of home work to be done before work can be started on super thermal stations, such as those the advanced Western nations are going in increasingly for.

Sethna's caution

Mr. H.N. Sethna, Chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission and protagonist of nuclear power stations, has cautioned against super thermal stations without a preliminary research and development (R and D) exercise.

The National Committee on Science and Technology (NCST) has suggested such an R and D exercise for the building of a 500 mw. unit with "maximum indigenous input."

Mr. Subramaniam's budget for 1975-76 has not made any provision as such for this purpose. His provision for creating a Central Thermal Power Corporation and for a 200 mw thermal station at Farakka will, however, serve as advance action.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO MARCH 17, 1925

The Indian Radio Telegraph Co.

Bombay, March 16: Prospectus has been issued of the Indian Radio Telegraph Company Ltd., with a capital of 3 crores of rupees divided into 200,000 one-hundred rupee ordinary shares and 100,000 Deferreds, of which 27,000 Ordinary and 18,000 Deferred shares are being issued at present. Of this issue, 10,800 shares ordinary are being issued to the Marconis Wireless Telegraph Company for cash and all Deferreds are being credited to Marconis.

From Page One

31 killed in U.S. strikes; Houthis vow reply

In its response, Iran "strongly condemned the brutal air strikes" in a statement, denouncing them as a "gross violation of the principles of the UN Charter".

The head of the country's Revolutionary Guards, Hossein Salami, said: "Iran will not wage war, but if anyone threatens, it will give appropriate, decisive and conclusive responses." He also denied his country's involvement in the Houthis' attacks.

The Houthis' political bureau said its "forces are fully prepared to confront escalation with escalation".

The Palestinian group Hamas, which has praised the Houthi support, lashed out at the U.S. strikes, branding them "a stark violation of international law and an assault on the country's sovereignty and stability".

Every attempt for peace met with hostility: PM

"That is why we actively work towards dialogue. Instead of discord, we stress on dialogue, because only through dialogue can we build a stable cooperative relationship that serves the best interests of both nations," he added.

The Prime Minister noted that his October, 2024 talks with Chinese President Xi Jinping are bearing fruit. "After my recent meeting with President Xi, we have seen a return to normalcy at the border. We are now working to restore conditions to how they were before 2020," he said, referring to the clashes at the Line of Actual Control in 2020 that led to deaths on both sides for the first time since 1975. "Slowly but surely, trust, enthusiasm, and energy should return. But of course, it will take some time, as there has been a five-year gap," Mr. Modi added.

Mr. Modi said he shares a bond of mutual trust with U.S. President Donald Trump and they connect well because they believe in putting their respective national interests above everything else. Mr. Modi hailed Mr. Trump as a man of courage, who took his own decisions, and was unwaveringly dedicated to the United States.

"Even after being shot, he remained unwaveringly dedicated to America. His life was for his nation. This showed his America First spirit, just as I believe in nation first, India first," Mr. Modi said. "I stand for India first and that's why we connect so well," he added.

The Prime Minister said President Trump appeared far more prepared than before in his second term. "He has a clear roadmap in his mind with well-defined steps, each one designed to lead him toward his goals," he said. He also recalled his meetings with key members of the Trump administration during his recent visit to the U.S., including Vice President J.D. Vance, Director of National Intelligence Tulsi Gabbard, Vivek Ramaswamy and Elon Musk. "I truly believe he has put together a strong, capable group. And with such a team, I feel they are capable of implementing President Trump's vision," Mr. Modi said.

'Tamil letter in logo to assert language policy'

In a video clip of the *Ungalil Oruvan* Q&A posted on his social media handle, he recalled having pleaded with the Centre over several demands, including releasing of funds towards the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme, and disaster management, school education, among others.

"The Union Finance Minister, who did not respond to all those, has spoken about this. Even she has mentioned '₹' in many of her posts. Everyone uses the simple 'Rs.' in English to denote rupees," he said. "In all, our Budget as well as Tamil are a hit nationally," Mr. Stalin said.

To a query on the preparations for the State Budget, Mr. Stalin said inputs from members of the Chief Minister's economic advisory committees, responses from the grassroots of the society, and case studies from other States and countries were considered. Ministers and officials brainstormed for several days in the evenings in the Secretariat to finalise the State Budget for 2025-26, he said.

'Receiving feedback'

Citing the Budget coverage reports of many newspapers, including *The Hindu* and *The Hindu BusinessLine*, Mr. Stalin said feedback from various sections of society underline the response to the Budget. He also recalled how he took feedback from social media while finalising the Budget.

When he came across the news that Telangana was proposing to allow members of the transgender community in regulating traffic, Mr. Stalin said: "I thought we should do the same in Tamil Nadu too and that is how we decided to induct them in the Home Guards."

Rejecting criticism from various Opposition parties, Mr. Stalin said: "If the criticism is constructive, we can consider it. If they are making criticism with only negativity, it only shows their angst against the government."

Pointing out that the debts were increasing between 2011 and 2021, Mr. Stalin said it had come down since 2021. Borrowing was inevitable for any government, he contended and further said his government was using it as an investment for future generations.

Global intelligence chiefs converge in Delhi meet

Counterterrorism and intelligence-sharing systems among issues discussed at the conference, which is held a day before Raisina Dialogue; Tulsi Gabbard, Five Eyes chiefs among attendees

Dinakar Peri
NEW DELHI

Building ties: U.S. Director of National Intelligence Tulsi Gabbard met PM Modi last month during his visit to Washington DC. AFP

Global challenges and intelligence-sharing mechanisms, as well as immigration and extradition, were among a host of issues discussed at the fourth conference of global intelligence and security chiefs hosted by National Security Adviser Ajit Doval on Sunday. The meeting had over 28 attendees, according to official sources.

The conference is usually held a day before the annual three-day Raisina Dialogue, which is scheduled this year from March 17 to 19. This year's conference and the Dialogue are being held amid the global uncertainties caused by U.S. President Donald Trump's policies and the resultant ripple effects in major issues across the globe.

"The top points on the agenda were counterterrorism, Indo-Pacific cooperation, global challenges, global security and intel-sharing mechanisms, immigration and extradition, and transnational crimes, narcotics and terror funding," an official source in the know said. Intelligence sharing on transnational crimes and counterterrorism were the key issues for India, another official said.

Around 20 countries were represented at the conference, including the U.S., Canada, Australia, and Russia, it was learnt. U.S. Director of National Intelligence Tulsi Gabbard attended the meeting and reportedly also held talks with Mr. Doval. She was also scheduled to speak at the Raisina Dialogue.

"I am Wheels Up on a multi-nation trip to the Indo-Pacific, a region I know very well having grown up as a child of the Pacific. I'll be going to Japan, Thailand, and India, with a brief stop in France en route back to DC. Building strong relationships, understanding, and open lines of communication are vital to achieving President Trump's objectives of peace, freedom and prosperity...," Ms. Gabbard posted on X on March 11 before beginning her trip.

The chiefs of the Five Eyes countries, comprising Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, and the U.S., were all present, though it was not clear if a separate meeting of the Five Eyes chiefs with Mr. Doval was in the offing.

The visit of Canadian spy chief Daniel Rogers has come as India looks to reset its with Ottawa after a deep freeze in bilateral relationship over Hardeep Singh Nijjar murder case.

The conference is organised by the country's external intelligence agency, the Research and Analysis Wing (RAW) and the National Security Council Secretariat (NSCS) that reports to Mr. Doval.

The meet was held for the first time in April 2022 a day before the start of the Raisina Dialogue, India's flagship conference on geopolitics and geo-strategy, organised by the Ministry of External Affairs in collaboration with the Observer Research Foundation.

New Bill proposes jail term up to 7 years for using forged passport

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

Anyone found using a forged passport or visa for entering, exiting or staying in India will be punished with a jail term of up to seven years and a fine to the extent of ₹10 lakh if the new immigration Bill is approved by Parliament.

The Bill also provides for mandatory reporting of information about foreigners by hotels, universities, other educational institutions, hospitals and nursing homes to enable tracking of overstaying foreigners.

International airlines and ships must submit passenger and crew manifests at Indian ports.

The Bill states that using forged documents for entering, exiting or staying in India can lead to imprisonment of two years to seven years and a penalty of ₹1 lakh to ₹10 lakh. Foreigners entering without valid documents may face up to five years in jail and fines up to ₹5 lakh.

The Immigration and Foreigners Bill, 2025, is comprehensive legislation to regulate all matters relating to foreigners and immigration.

Matters relating to foreigners and immigration are presently administered through four Acts - the Passport (Entry into India) Act, 1920, the Registration of Foreigners Act, 1939, the Foreigners Act, 1946, and the Immigration (Carriers' Liability) Act, 2000. All these laws are now proposed to be repealed.

This legislation is in line with the government's policy of simplification of laws, ease of doing business and minimising compliance burden. It seeks to balance the requirements of national security and related issues of immigration of foreigners with the need to promote economic growth and tourism.

According to existing laws, all foreigners on long-term - more than 180 days - student, medical, research, employment, missionary and project visas are required to register with the Foreigners Regional Registration Officer (FRRO) or the Foreigners Registration Officer (FRO) concerned, having jurisdiction over the place, within 14 days of arrival.

Wanted LeT terrorist Abu Qatal killed by gunmen in Pakistan

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

He was considered the most trusted handler of 26/11 Mumbai terror attack mastermind Saeed

A top Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) commander, wanted by Indian security agencies for several deadly terror attacks in Jammu and Kashmir, was eliminated by gunmen in an attack in Pakistan, officials said on Sunday.

Zia-ur-Rehman, alias Nadeem, alias Abu Qatal, alias Qatal Sindhi, was killed in the Jhelum area of Punjab on Saturday evening. His security guard was also killed, the officials said, quoting information received from Pakistan.

Considered the most trusted handler of LeT founder and 26/11 Mumbai terror attack mastermind Hafiz Saeed, they said 43-year-old Rehman was the main handler of the terror outfit involved in the planning of various attacks in the Poonch-Rajouri region of Jammu and Kashmir.

The officials said Rehman had infiltrated the Jammu region in early 2000 and exfiltrated in 2005. He had a wide network of Over Ground Workers in Poonch and Rajouri through his old contacts, they said.

He was chargesheeted by the National Investigation Agency (NIA) under the UAPA and other sections for an attack on Hindu minorities in Dhangri Village of Rajouri District in 2023, they added.

The officials said Rehman is also the mastermind of the Reasi bus attack.

He was the main link between the LeT cadres and its operators in PoK and Sindh Province of Pakistan, the officials said.

False narrative created over Gujarat riots, courts found us innocent: PM

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

Lively discussion: Prime Minister Narendra Modi during a podcast with Lex Fridman. PTI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has said the discourse around the 2002 post-Godhra riots in Gujarat was an attempt to create a false narrative and his political opponents in power at the Centre wanted him to be punished but the courts cleared his name.

In a podcast with Lex Fridman, Mr. Modi said the perception that the 2002 riots were the biggest riots ever in Gujarat was an attempt to push misinformation. "If you review the data from before 2002, you will see that Gujarat faced frequent riots. Curfews were constantly being imposed somewhere. Communal violence would erupt over trivial issues such as kite flying contests or even bicycle collisions," he said during the podcast released on Sunday.

The Prime Minister said the riots in Gujarat in 1969 lasted for more than six months and that was an era when he was nowhere on the political horizon.

He said the Godhra train burning incident took place barely three days after he was elected a legislator of the Gujarat Assembly.

"It was a tragedy of unimaginable magnitude, people were burned alive. You can imagine, against the backdrop of incidents like the Kandahar hijacking, the attack on parliament, or even 9/11, and then to have so many people killed and burned alive, you can imagine how tense and volatile the situation was," he said.

"Nothing should happen, we also wish so. Everyone would wish there should be peace," the Prime Minister said

Mr. Modi, who was the Gujarat Chief Minister at that time, said the big incident at Godhra was the sparking point and violence took place. He said that a fake narrative was spread regarding the Godhra case. "But, the courts investigated the matter thoroughly and found us completely innocent. Those who were truly responsible have faced justice from the courts," he said.

He said his political opponents were in power at the Centre when the violence took place and they were keen to see him punished over the allegations.

"At that time, our political opponents were in power, and naturally they wanted all allegations against us to stick. They wanted to see us punished. Despite their relentless efforts, the judiciary analysed the situation meticulously twice and ultimately found us completely innocent," he said.

He said Gujarat has not seen riots since 2002. "Over the past 22 years, there hasn't been a single major riot in Gujarat... Gujarat remains completely peaceful," Mr. Modi said.

Centre has approved Chandrayaan-5 mission: ISRO

Press Trust of India
CHENNAI

The Centre has recently accorded approval for the ambitious Chandrayaan-5 mission to study the moon, ISRO Chairman V. Narayanan said on Sunday.

At an event to felicitate him for taking over as the Chairman of the Bengaluru-headquartered Indian Space Research Organisation, Mr. Narayanan said that unlike the Chandrayaan-3 mission which carried the 25-kilogram rover 'Prayagyaan', the Chandrayaan-5 mission would carry a 250-kg rover to study the moon's surface.

The Chandrayaan-4 Mission, expected to be launched in 2027, aims to bring samples collected from the moon.

Muslim community needs to focus more on educational advancement, says Gadkari

The Hindu Bureau
MUMBAI

Nitin Gadkari

Union Minister Nitin Gadkari on Saturday emphasised the crucial role of education in the uplift of Muslims and strongly criticised the prevalence of caste-based politics in the country.

Speaking at a function in Nagpur, Mr. Gadkari said education was the cornerstone of development and social progress.

He stressed that the Muslim community, in particular, needed to focus more on educational advancement.

"In our society, the community that needs education the most is the Muslim community," the Union Minister said.

Highlighting occupational patterns, he pointed out that only a limited number of professions were currently dominant within the Muslim community.

"Unfortunately, professions like running tea stalls, *paan* shops, scrap dealing, truck driving, and cleaning have gained prominence," he added.

"If people from our society become engineers, doctors, IAS and IPS officers, then our society will progress. We may offer prayers in the mosque a hundred times, but without embracing science and technology, what will our future look like?" Mr. Gadkari said, referring to the achievements of former President A.P.J. Abdul Kalam.

At the event, the Minister expressed his belief that a person's greatness was not dependent on caste, or religion, but by their qualities.

"I am in politics, and caste leaders often come to meet me. But I am clear – I will live on my own terms, whether or not I get votes," he said.

He added that education uplifted society in addition to one's family.

Whitewashing of Shahi Jama Masjid in Sambhal under way

Press Trust of India
SAMBHAL

The whitewashing of the outer wall of the Shahi Jama Masjid in Uttar Pradesh's Sambhal began on Sunday morning under the supervision of the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) in line with a High Court order, an advocate of the mosque committee said.

The Mughal-era mosque here has been at the centre of a major row after a petition claimed that it was the site of an ancient Hindu temple.

The Allahabad High Court had on March 12 directed the ASI to undertake and complete the whitewashing at the mosque's outer wall within one week while hearing the objections against the ASI survey report by the Shahi Jama Masjid management committee which had also sought permission for whitewashing, additional lighting and installation of decorative lights outside the disputed structure.

Shahi Jama Masjid's president Zafar Ali said the work started at around 9 a.m. and nine to 10 labourers are engaged.

"If the work has to be completed in four days, then around 20 labourers would be needed," he said.

Amid reported objection by the Hindu side over the use of green colour to paint the outer wall of the mosque, Mr. Ali said, "We are using the colours which have been used for hundreds of years. We are using white, green and light golden colours," he said.

Bodo peace accord proved Cong. wrong: Shah in Assam

The Hindu Bureau
GUWAHATI

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Sunday said the Congress had mocked him after he signed the third Bodo Peace Accord, but it had sustained to prove the grand old party wrong.

He took a swipe at the Congress while addressing the 57th annual conference of the All Bodo Students' Union at Dotma near Kokrajhar, headquarters of the 8,970-sq.km Bodoland Territorial Region (BTR), where tribal council elections are due by December.

"Congress made fun of me when the BTR peace agreement was signed. They said there will be no peace in Bodoland and this agreement will turn out to be a joke," Mr. Shah said.

"Today, the accord has brought peace and development in a region where discussions once revolved around conflict and bloodshed," he said.

Referring to the seizure of methamphetamine tablets worth ₹88 crore, and the arrest of four members of an international drug cartel in Imphal and Guwahati recently, Mr. Shah said the crackdown on drugs would continue.

"No mercy for drug cartels," he said in an X post.

Opposition to press for House debate on delimitation, EPICs

Parliament to discuss functioning of Home and Agriculture Ministries; sources say Opposition would want to debate External Affairs or Defence

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

While the Opposition continues with its demand to have a debate on alleged duplication of elector photo identity card (EPIC) numbers and delimitation, Parliament in the coming days is scheduled to discuss the functioning of the Home Ministry in the Rajya Sabha and the Agriculture Ministry in the Lok Sabha.

The government is yet to give any assurance to the Opposition on scheduling deliberations on EPIC numbers and delimitation. A senior Opposition leader, while pointing out that they had not disrupted the functioning of Parliament hoping the government will provide them space to deliberate on their concerns about the two "pertinent" issues, said: "They can decide the rule and the mechanism for the discussion, as long as they schedule it."

As per the schedule fixed so far, the Lok Sabha will be discussing functioning of three Ministries– Jal shakti, Railways and Agriculture. Discussions on two more Ministries had been scheduled.

On the agenda: The Lok Sabha will be discussing functioning of Jal shakti, Railways and Agriculture Ministries. ANI

No clarity

According to sources, the Opposition would want to debate External Affairs or Defence, aimed at bringing a clearer understanding of the India-China stand-off and the tariff rates declared by the Trump administration in the U.S.. But the government is yet to clarify whether any of the two subjects will be allowed or if a third subject will be introduced.

In the Rajya Sabha, Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw is scheduled to reply to the inconclusive debate on the Ministry on Monday and it will be followed by a discussion on the Manipur Budget and other Appropriation Bills.

On Tuesday, the Upper House will discuss the functioning of the Ministry of Health followed by a debate on the Ministry of Home Affairs on Wednesday.

'No language should be imposed on T.N. till the State is ready for it'

Congress MP says party will oppose the imposition of any language but it has never been against Hindi; he says it will have an internal discussion to formulate its position on delimitation

INTERVIEW

Manickam Tagore

Sobhana K. Nair

A three-time Lok Sabha member from Tamil Nadu, Congress Whip in the Lok Sabha and member of the Congress Working Committee, Manickam Tagore lays down the nuance between the Congress's position and the stand of its ally Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam on two issues – delimitation and the three-language policy – that dominated Parliament last week. Excerpts:

Last week saw heated debate on the National Education Policy in both Houses of Parliament. The government claims DMK is obfuscating the narrative and that it does not seek to impose any language. What is the Congress's stand on this issue?

The National Education Policy was formulated without any structured discussion, inside or outside Parliament. It is clearly discriminatory, exclusionary, seeks to centralise education and promotes privatisation. It is not National Education Policy, but RSS Education Policy. In 2020, Tamil Nadu MPs met the then Education Minister, but our concerns were ignored. After unilaterally bringing the policy, the Centre is now forcing the States to adopt it by threatening to withhold the Central funds. An amount of ₹2,152 crore under PM-Shri that was owed to Tamil Nadu has not been released, which is unacceptable. The RSS believes in bulldozing, rather than having a conversation. This attitude is dangerous for the federal structure. We oppose this gunpoint imposition of the policies.

Does the Congress agree with the DMK stand on the issue? Bihar elections are due in a few months, when the Congress along with its ally in Tamil Nadu has taken a strident anti-Hindi position in Tamil Nadu, how does it go and canvass for votes in Bihar?

We have to understand that the DMK has had a legacy of taking an anti-Hindi position and Tamil Nadu has a history of anti-Hindi struggles going back to the pre-Independence era. The Union government, like the previous Congress-led governments, should have been more sensitive towards Tamil Nadu on the question of three-language policy. No language should be imposed on Tamil Nadu till the State is ready for it. Our State unit in Tamil Nadu supports the two-language policy. The Congress stands for all Indian languages and its many dialects. At the same time, we will oppose the imposition of any one language. But let me unequivocally state the Congress has never been against Hindi. We don't see everything in the binary of black and white. Let us not confuse the DMK's stand with the Congress's stand. We are a national party with presence from Kanniyakumari to Kashmir and the DMK is a State party.

The other issue that dominated the Parliament session last week was the impending delimitation. The DMK is leading the protest on the subject. For the Congress, this again is a difficult issue. Your State units in south and north may have different perspectives on this. What is the party's position?

The fear aired by many leaders that the voice of several States will be diminished is primarily because of the government's refusal to have a conversation. The government is not saying what formula it will follow. They have not had a discussion with the stakeholders, Opposition or the Chief Ministers. Home Minister Amit Shah, without any prior deliberation, proclaimed that no South Indian States will lose seats, delimitation will be done on a pro-rata basis. What is this pro-rata basis? Will seats in other States go up? Details are not known. This discussion started with Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M.K. Stalin's demand followed by Mr. Shah's remarks. It is a complicated subject, we are a national party, and led by our president, Mallikarjun Kharge, we will have an internal discussion within our party to formulate our position.

Considering the various shades of opinions on the two issues, shouldn't INDIA, which last met in June 2024, sit together to formulate a common position.

The INDIA bloc was a forum to maximise coordination between the Opposition parties during the general elections. The like-minded Opposition parties continue to coordinate with each other in Parliament, to decide the floor strategy in both the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha. And you saw the INDIA bloc parties came together on the issue of disparities in the voter list. Whenever there is a common issue, we work together.

In a 2014 judgment, Supreme Court had favoured 'linguistic secularism'

NEWS ANALYSIS

Krishnadas Rajagopal
NEW DELHI

The debate over the language formula in the National Education Policy rages, though the Supreme Court had favoured "linguistic secularism", or the acceptance of the legitimate aspirations of the speakers of different languages in India, in a 2014 judgment.

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M.K. Stalin has accused the Centre of imposing Hindi through the National Education Policy at the cost of "totally destroying Tamil Nadu's progress in education".

The court in *U.P. Hindi Sahittya Sammelan vs State of U.P.* in September 2014 had observed that the mode of development or evolution of both law and language in the country was "organic". Indian language laws, the court said, were "not rigid but accommodative – the object being to secure linguistic secularism".

The court said Indian language laws were not rigid but accommodative. FILE PHOTO

The judgment referred to Constitutional expert H.M. Seervai's commentary on the conflict which arose in the Constituent Assembly in 1949 over the question of Hindi as a "national language". A compromise proposed in the Munshi-Ayyangar formula led to the inclusion of Article 343 in the Constitution declaring Hindi in the Devanagari script as the official language of the Union.

'Official language'

"Though Hindi was selected as the official language, it could not be described as the national language, for, it was not the language generally spoken in all parts of India, and though spoken by the largest single group of people, that group did not constitute the majority of people in India. Besides, there were regional languages such as Bengali in Bengal, Tamil in Madras, and Marathi and Gujarati in the erstwhile State of Bombay which were spoken by large populations and it was claimed for those languages that they were more developed than Hindi. Hindi was therefore described as the official language," the judgment quoted from Mr. Seervai's commentary.

Article 351 however imposes a "duty" on the Union government to promote the spread of the Hindi language. However, the Allahabad High Court, in its 1982 judgment in *Sunil K.R. Sahastrabudhey vs Director, IIT Kanpur*, observed that "although Hindi is the national language of India and Article 351 lays down a duty on the Union to promote the spread of Hindi language to develop it so that it may serve as a medium of expression for all the elements of the composite culture of India, there is no right conferred on any citizen to compel an institution to impart education in that particular language".

Besides, Article 29(1) of the Constitution recognised that "every section of the society which has a distinct language script or culture of its own" has the fundamental right to conserve the same.

"This is a right which is conferred on both majority and minority," the top court had underscored.

The Supreme court, while responding to whether a student or a parent or a citizen has a right to choose the medium of instruction at primary school level in *State of Karnataka vs Associated Management of Primary & Secondary Schools*, said the fundamental right to speech and expression under Article 19 included the freedom of a primary class student to choose the language of instruction. The court said the state cannot impose control over such a choice.

In this, the court had taken a leaf from the U.S. Supreme Court's conclusion in *Pierce v. Society of Sisters of Holy Names* in 1924 that "a child is not a mere creature of the State".

Uttarakhand Minister quits amid row over his remarks

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Weeks after his controversial remarks against *pahadis*, or the people of the hills, Uttarakhand Finance and Parliamentary Affairs Minister Premchand Aggarwal submitted his resignation to Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami on Sunday. During the State Assembly's Budget session, he had said that Uttarakhand was not created solely for *pahadis*, triggering a backlash.

WEST BENGAL STATE ELECTRICITY DISTRIBUTION COMPANY LIMITED
(A Govt. of West Bengal Enterprise)
Regd. Office : Vidyut Bhavan, Block-DJ, Sector-II, Bidhannagar, Kolkata - 700 091
CIN : U40109WB2007SGC113473, www.wbsedcl.in
WBSEDCL
Request for Proposals
e-Tender-cum-e-Reverse Auction No. **WBSEDCL/PT&P/e-NIT/02/2025** Date: **17.03.2025** is invited by the Chief Engineer (PT&P), WBSEDCL, Vidyut Bhavan, Bidhannagar, Kolkata-700091 for purchase of power on Short Term Basis for the period from **01.07.2025** to **30.09.2025** through Traders/Licensees/Bidders. Interested parties may download the tender documents from the website **https://www.mstcecommerce.com** directly with the help of Digital Signature Certificate from **11:00 hrs.** of **17.03.2025** and submit the same on or before **17:00 hrs.** of **21.03.2025.** Details will be available on the Company's website: **www.wbsedcl.in**
For details, visit **www.wbsedcl.in** ICA- T5805(3)/2025

राष्ट्रीय स्वास्थ्य मिशन, राजस्थान
स्वास्थ्य एवं परिवार कल्याण विभाग, स्वास्थ्य भवन, तिलक मार्ग,
राजस्थान, जयपुर फोन न. 0141-2225736, E-Mail ID: cembraj@gmail.com
क्रमांक : 4239 दिनांक : 05/03/2025
ई-निविदा सूचना संख्याः 09/2024-25
चिकित्सा एवं स्वास्थ्य विभाग, राजस्थान में 03 भवन निर्माण कार्यों हेतु उपयुक्त श्रेणी में सार्वजनिक निर्माण विभाग/ राज्य सरकार/ केन्द्र सरकार के अधिकृत संगठनों/ केन्द्रीय लोक निर्माण विभाग/ डाक एवं दूर संचार विभाग/ रेल्वे इत्यादि में पंजीकृत अनुभवी संवेदकों, जो कि राजस्थान सरकार के उपयुक्त श्रेणी के संवेदकों के समकक्ष हो, से निर्धारित प्रपत्र में Online निविदायें आमंत्रित की जाती हैं। निविदा से सम्बन्धित विवरण DIPR की वेबसाईट www.dipronline.org, www.sppp.raj.nic.in, http://eproc.rajasthan.gov.in व विभागीय वेबसाईट http://rajswasthya.nic.in पर देखा जा सकता हैं। निविदा की कुल अनुमानित लागत राशि रु. 1365.00 लाख हैं।
UBN:- 1. MHS2425WSOB05192
2. MHS2425WSOB05193, 3. MHS2425WSOB05194
DIPR/C/3482/25
मुख्य अभियंता
चिकित्सा एवं स्वास्थ्य राजस्थान, जयपुर

राजस्थान राज्य बीज एवं जैविक प्रमाणीकरण संस्था (राजस्थान सरकार द्वारा स्थापित) तृतीय तल, पंत कृषि भवन, जनपथ, सी-स्कीम, जयपुर- 302005 (राज.)
Director Rajasthan State Seed And Organic Certification Agency, (Established By Rajasthan Govt.) IIIrd Floor Pant Krishi Bhawan C-Scheme Janpath, Jaipur-302005 (Raj.)
F. 1(92)/RSSOCA/Store/2023/266 Dated : 07.03.2025
E-Procurement Tender Notice
The Bids for Supply of Satin/white color tags consumbales etc. are online invited from interested bidders approx cost amount Rs. 2.94 Crores up to 1:00 PM of dated 24.03.2025. Other terms and condition of the bids may be viewed on the website of department http://www.agriculture.rajasthan.gov.in and SPP Portal website http://sppp.rajasthan.gov.in & http://eproc.rajasthan.gov.in
UBN No. SCA2425GLOB00003 -Sd-
(Kailash Chand Meena)
DIPR/C/3554/2025 Director

OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER IRRIGATION CIRCLE CAD CHAMBAL KOTA
Tel. Office. 0744-2500149, Email:-seirrgcad@rajasthan.gov.in
No:- F-4151 Date:- 07-03-2025
E- TENDER NOTICE NO. 01/2024-25
Bids for the following works are invited from "AA" & "A" Class category or equivalent contactors/firms registered in CAD/Water Resources Department and State Government/Other State Government/Authorized organizations of Central Government/CPWD/Post and telegraph department/Railway etc. interested bidders up to 06.00 PM dated 26.03.2025 :-

S. No.	Name of work	Approx Cost (Rs. in Lacs)
1	Lining work of balance reaches 7.09 Km. length of shreepura, Chaktodi, Rampura Sub minor off-taking from Etawa Branch Canal of RMC CAD Kota	555.78

Other particular of bid may be visited on the procurement portal http/www.eproc.rajasthan.gov.in, www.dipr.rajasthan.gov.in & http://www.sppp/raj.nic.in
NIB Code :- CDK2425A0021 (Lakhan Lal Gupta)
UBN No. :- CDK2425WLOB00120 Superintending Engineer
Irrigation Circle
DIPR/C/3546/2025 CAD Chambal Kota

Government of Tamilnadu
DIRECTORATE OF TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING
3rd Floor, CMDA Complex, E&C Market Road, Koyambedu, Chennai – 600 107.
File No:14908/2024/TCP5 NOTICE INVITING TENDER Date: 17.03.2025.

Name of the Work	Institutional Strengthening and Assessment and preparation of Action plan for the Directorate of Town and Country Planning (DTCP) & New Urban Development Authorities (UDA's) in Tamil Nadu
EMD	INR ₹ 1,24,000/-
Tender Documents available on website	www.tntenders.gov.in @ 14:00 hrs (IST) on 20-03-2025
Start date for submission of tender	10:00 hrs (IST) on 01-04-2025
Last date and time for receipt of online bids	21-04-2025 @ 14.00 hrs. IST
Bid Opening Date	22-04-2025 @ 16.00 hrs. IST
Name and Address of the office Inviting Tender	The Director, Town and Country Planning Department, 3rd Floor, CMDA Complex, E&C Market Road Koyambedu, Chennai – 600 107.

Further details can be seen on the website : www.tntenders.gov.in
DIPR/1038/TENDER/2025 DIRECTOR

भारत सरकार - अंतरिक्ष विभाग / GOVERNMENT OF INDIA - DEPARTMENT OF SPACE
निर्माण एवं अनुरक्षण समूह, एसडीएससी-शार / CONSTRUCTION AND MAINTENANCE GROUP, SDSC-SHAR
श्रीहरिकोटा / नेल्लूर (जिला), आं.प्र. / SRIHARIKOTA - 524124
संक्षिप्त ई–निविदा सूचना / Brief E-TENDER NOTICE
ई–निविदा सूचना सं./ e- Tender Notice No: CMG/C/CON/248739 तिथि/ Date. 13/03/2025
भारत के राष्ट्रपति की ओर से, **"एसडीएससी शार के यूटी, एसएलपी के निकट जिपलाइन गलियारे में जीआई चौकी कड़ीबद्ध बाड़े के साथ आरआर विनाई वाले रेत से भरे गये मार्ग का निर्माण (सिविल कार्य)" (Rs.80 लाख)** के लिए ई–निविदा के माध्यम से मद दर निविदाएं आमंत्रित की जाती हैं। निविदा दस्तावेज **24/03/2025** को **14:30** बजे तक डाउनलोड किए जा सकते हैं। विस्तृत सूचना हेतु इच्छुक निविदाकार हमारी वेबसाइट **www.isro.gov.in** या **www.tenderwizard.com/ISRO** देखें।
On behalf of President of India, Item Rate tenders are invited through e-tendering for **"Providing sand filled pathway with RR masonry wall with GI post chain link fencing in Zipline corridor near UT, SLP, SDSC SHAR (Civil works)" (Rs.80 Lakhs)**; Tender documents can be downloaded up to **24/03/2025**, **14:30** hrs. Interested tenderers may visit **www.isro.gov.in** or **www.tenderwizard.com/ISRO** for details
हस्ताक्षरित- समूह प्रधान, सीएमजी / एसडीएससी शार / Sd/- GROUP HEAD, CMG / SDSC SHAR

Office of Additional Chief Engineer PHED, Region Bharatpur
Telephone No 05644-221500, Email: rj_acebha@nic.in
Notice Inviting Bid No. 33-34/2024-25
Online bids for NIT No. 33-34/2024-25 (02 work), Costing Rs. 3666.20 Lacs is invited on behalf of the Governor of Rajasthan from eligible enlisted in appropriate class contractors of PHED, Rajasthan and meeting eligibility criteria. Contractors enlisted with other departments of Government of Rajasthan and enlisted with CPWD/ Postal/ Telecom/ Railways/ MES/ other State Government/ Central Government undertakings/ organization in class equivalent to "A or AA" class of Rajasthan (as applicable) and meeting prescribed eligibility criteria may also apply. Details of this Bid notification and pre-qualification criteria can also be seen in NIB exhibited on web site www.dipr.rajasthan.gov.in, http://sppp.rajasthan.gov.in and http://eproc.rajasthan.gov.in. Bids are to be submitted online electronic format on web site http://eproc.rajasthan.gov.in from 07-03-2025 to 01-04-2025 (6PM) & Bids are to be opend at 11.00 AM on 02-04-2025.
NIB Code : PHE2425A5142 (Mohan Lal Meena)
UBN No. : 1. PHE2425WLOB11253 Addl. Chief Engineer
2. PHE2425WLOB11254 PHED, Region Bharatpur
DIPR/C/3582/2025

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Commissionerate of Agriculture,
Seshadri Road, Bengaluru – 560001
No.: DDA(F&M)/MNR/e-RFP/2025-26 Date: 15.03.2025
SHORT TERM e-REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RfP) NOTIFICATION
Technical and Financial Proposals are invited through GoK e-procurement portal from the registered Manufacturers/ Authorized distributors for Carrier based Bio-fertilizers, Liquid based Bio-fertilizers, VAM-Biofertilizer, Green manure seeds (Diancha, Sunhemp, Pillipesara(Phaseolus trilobus) Horsegram & Cowpea), Zinc sulphate (21% & 33%), Borax (10.5% & 14.5%), Ferrous sulphate (19%), Magnesium sulphate (9.5%), Micronutrient Mixtures, Gypsum, Agricultural Lime, Dolomite, Vermicompost, Organic Manure, Phosphate Rich Organic Manure, Non-edible de-oiled Neem Cake and City Compost(Bulk & Packed Supply) required for various Departmental programmes for the year 2025-26. These Agricultural inputs are required for supply to the farmers under different schemes of the Department.
Short Term REQUEST for PROPOSAL (RfP) document is available in the e-Procurement website https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in. Suppliers must be accompanied by a Common Earnest Money Deposit (CEMD) for an amount of Rs.50,000/- which should be paid online through e-Procurement portal using any of the following payment modes: Credit Card-Visa or Master card, Debit card-Visa or Master card, Internet banking, and offline payments through Remittance at the Bank counter using challan, National Electronic Fund Transfer (NEFT/RTGS). The Applicant has to further submit a Performance Bank Guarantee as per the Technical Proposals submitted along with the Copy of the documents uploaded, one day before or on the day of opening of technical proposal to "Deputy Director of Agriculture (Fertilizer and Manure), Commissionerate of Agriculture, Sheshadri Road, Bangalore".
Suppliers should upload the documents through e-Procurement website https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in on or before 02.04.2025 within 05:00 P.M. The hard copies of the documents which are not uploaded online through e-procurement portal will not be accepted. The Proposal Scrutinizing Committee will open the Technical Proposal on 04.04.2025 at 11.00 AM at Samruddhi Conference Hall, Department of Agriculture, Sheshadri Road, Bangalore – 560 001. The date of Financial Proposal opening will be communicated later. Estimated value of the RfP is approximately Rs.36.15 Crore.
DIPR/CP/LC/5729/2024-25 Sd/-, Director of Agriculture

INBRIEF

190 patients rescued after fire breaks out in Gwalior hospital

A fire broke out in a government hospital in Madhya Pradesh's Gwalior city early on Sunday, following which, more than 190 patients were rescued, officials said. No casualty was reported in the incident, they said. The blaze erupted at around 1 a.m. in an air-conditioner of the intensive care unit of the gynaecology department of the Kamla Raja Hospital, which is part of the Gajra Raja Medical College, Gwalior Collector Ruchika Chauhan said. More than 190 patients, including 13 from the ICU, were rescued and shifted to another hospital, officials said. All patients of the ICU and other wards of the hospital were safe, Ms. Chauhan said. PTI

Congress targets govt. over India's air quality ranking

The Congress on Sunday attacked the government after a world air quality report ranked India as the world's fifth most polluted country, and demanded that all "anti-people" environmental law amendments over the past 10 years be rolled back. In a statement, Congress general secretary (Communications) Jairam Ramesh said the Swiss air quality technology company IQAIR has just released its 2024 World Air Quality Report. He claimed that according to the report, 74 of the world's 100 most polluted cities are in India, and national capital New Delhi is the second-most polluted city in the world. PTI

India, New Zealand resume trade deal talks after decade

The FTA negotiations aim to achieve balanced outcomes that enhance supply chain integration and improve market access, says Commerce Ministry after a meeting between Goyal and McClay

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

After a gap of about 10 years, India and New Zealand on Sunday announced resumption of negotiations for a proposed free trade agreement (FTA) to boost economic ties.

India and New Zealand began negotiating the Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement (CECA) in April 2010 to boost trade in goods, services, and investment. However, after 10 rounds of discussions, the talks stalled in February 2015.

"The two nations are pleased to announce the launch of negotiations for a comprehensive and mutually beneficial India-New Zealand Free Trade Agreement (FTA) negotiations," the Commerce Ministry said.

The announcement was made after a meeting of Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal and Todd McClay, New Zealand's Minister for Trade and Investment.

Prime Minister of New Zealand Christopher Luxon is here on a four-day visit from Sunday.

Deep dive: Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal with New Zealand Trade Minister Todd McClay in New Delhi on Sunday. ANI

"The India-New Zealand FTA negotiations aim to achieve balanced outcomes that enhance supply chain integration and improve market access," it said. "With bilateral trade continuing to grow steadily, surpassing USD 1 billion during April-January 2025, the FTA negotiations aim to unlock new avenues for businesses and consumers, fostering mutual growth and prosperity of our nations," Mr. Goyal said in a post on X.

According to think tank Global Trade Research Initiative (GTRI), a major challenge in the renewed talks will be the disparity in tariff structures.

Common ground

New Zealand's average import tariff is only 2.3%, with over half of its tariff lines already duty-free, meaning Indian goods already have substantial access to its market.

In contrast, India's average tariff stands at 17.8%, meaning it would have to make significant reductions, making a traditional FTA less attractive for India. "As talks resume, both countries will need to find common ground on these issues to move forward successfully," GTRI founder Ajay Srivastava said.

He said earlier New Zealand was demanding greater access to India's dairy market, which India resisted to protect its domestic dairy industry that supports millions of farmers.

Currently, India's dairy imports from New Zealand are minimal (around $0.57 million), and while India may consider limited imports of value-added dairy products, it remains firm against allowing raw dairy imports, he said. India was also reluctant to lower tariffs on New Zealand's dairy, meat, and wine exports, while New Zealand pushed for more favourable trade terms.

"Pressure from the U.S. to open India's dairy and agriculture sectors may also influence negotiations," Mr. Srivastava said, adding that another key issue was India's demand for easier movement of its skilled professionals and better access for its IT and services sector.

Man evading police for a month in bank fraud case surrenders

The Hindu Bureau
MUMBAI

Arunachalam Ullahanathan Maruthuvar was arrested after he surrendered on Sunday. ANI

The Economic Offences Wing (EOW) of the Mumbai Police on Sunday arrested a key accused in the ₹122-crore New India Co-operative Bank (NICB) fraud case.

Officials said Arunachalam Ullahanathan Maruthuvar, 62, who had been evading the police for a month, surrendered in the morning.

The fourth accused in the case, he had been absconding since the first accused, Hitesh Mehta, a former general manager of the bank, and his associate were arrested in February, they said.

"It is alleged that Arunachalam Ullahanathan Maruthuvar received approximately ₹30 crore from the misappropriated funds of NICB from the main accused Hitesh Mehta. EOW had deployed multiple teams across various parts of India to trace Maruthuvar during the period in which he was absconding. Following his surrender, he was placed under arrest and produced before a court. The court has granted police custody till March 18 for further investigation," an official said.

A day earlier, the police had arrested Kapil Dedhia, another accused in the case. Mr. Dedhia was apprehended in Vadodara on Friday as part of a coordinated operation and brought to Mumbai on Saturday. He was formally arrested on Sunday morning and presented before the court, which sent him to police custody till March 19.

A sum of ₹12 crore, part of the funds misappropriated from the bank, was credited to Mr. Dedhia's account, officials said. A portion of this amount was received from Dharmesh Paun, who was arrested with Mr. Mehta.

Mr. Paun had been transferring the funds initially, while another portion was transferred to Mr. Mehta by Mr. Maruthuvar, officials said.

Odia poet Ramakanta Rath dies at 90; President, Prime Minister express condolences

Press Trust of India
BHUBANESWAR

Ramakanta Rath

Renowned Odia poet and former bureaucrat Ramakanta Rath died at his residence in the Kharvel Nagar area here on Sunday, family sources said. He was 90.

Rath, a Padma Bhushan awardee, is survived by three daughters and a son.

President Droupadi Murmu and Prime Minister Narendra Modi condoled the demise of Rath. Ms. Murmu, in a post on X, said Rath was a prominent figure in the Indian literary world. "He was honoured with many awards including Padma Bhushan. He has enriched the pan-Indian literature with his unforgettable contribution to Odia literature," she wrote.

"Shri Ramakanta Rath Ji distinguished himself as an effective administrator and scholar. His works, especially poetry, are widely popular among all sections of society. Pained by his passing away. My thoughts are with his family and admirers in this hour of grief. Om Shanti: PM @narendramodi," the Prime Minister's Office wrote on X.

Odisha Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi said Rath will always be remembered for his contribution to the Indian Administrative Service and to the world of literature. He announced that Rath's last rites will be performed with full state honours.

Rath was born on December 13, 1934 in Cuttack. After completing his MA in English literature from Ravenshaw College (now university), he joined the IAS in 1957. He retired as Chief Secretary of Odisha in 1992.

Some of the major poetry collections of Rath include *Kete Dinara* (1962), *Aneka Kothari* (1967), *Sandigdha Mrugaya* (1971), *Saptama Rutu* (1977), *Sachitra Andhara* (1982), *Sri Radha* (1985), and *Sreshtha Kavita* (1992). Some of his poetry has been translated into English and other languages.

Rath was honoured with the Sahitya Akademi Award in 1977, the Sarala Award in 1984, the Bishuva Samman in 1990, and the Sahitya Akademi Fellowship in 2009.

Immunising the elderly is crucial for disease prevention, say experts

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

Vaccination is a crucial yet often overlooked health measure for the elderly in India. Despite the absence of a dedicated national immunisation schedule for the elderly in the country, doctors stress the need for proactive administration of vaccines to protect older adults from preventable diseases.

Elder care also extends beyond vaccination to include physical activity, nutrition, mental health support, and chronic disease management, doctors said at the webinar "Prevention of illness: immunising the elderly" organised by Naruvi Hospitals, Vellore, in collaboration with *The Hindu*, on Sunday, as part of the "Healthy India, Happy India" webinar series. This is the sixth in a series of 15 webinars aimed at promoting health awareness and disease prevention. It featured four subject experts.

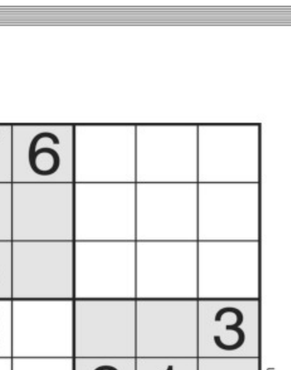
Importance of vaccines

Kurien Thomas, senior consultant physician and clinical epidemiologist, Naruvi Hospitals, Vellore, introduced the importance of immunising the elderly.

Dr. Thomas emphasised the importance of the pneumococcal, Hib, and hepatitis vaccines in elder care, and pointed out that 50% of severe pneumonia cases occur in the elderly, making vaccination a life-saving measure.

Pneumonia remains a major health burden, with 156 million cases globally and 8,00,000 deaths annually in India.

Dilip Mathai, senior consultant in infectious diseases, Naruvi Hospitals, presented an overview of different vaccines and guidelines for immunisation of the elderly.



Dr. Mathai also addressed vaccine hesitancy, citing a survey that found 60% of adults believed there were better ways to protect their health than vaccination, while 43% felt they were not at risk of falling ill.

Proper storage

Soumendra Nath Haldar, Assistant Professor, Department of Infectious Diseases and Advanced Microbiology, School of Tropical Medicine, Kolkata, spoke on vaccines for food and waterborne diseases. He stressed the need for vaccine clinics to provide immunisation for these diseases. He also explained the importance of proper storage, and cost-effective administration of vaccines.

Vasant C. Nagvekar, infectious diseases consultant, H. N. Reliance Foundation Hospital and Research Centre and the Lilavati Hospital, Mumbai, explained the need for more vital vaccines in healthcare for the elderly. He emphasised the necessity of annual influenza vaccines, shingles (herpes zoster), varicella zoster (chickenpox), coronavirus, and H5N1 (avian flu) vaccines for ageing adults.

The experts also addressed cost barriers and called for better health insurance coverage to prioritise immunisation in the elderly.

The webinar is available at *https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Sjuht-ZUyB9k*

Tension grips U.P. village over insult to Ambedkar

The Hindu Bureau
LUCKNOW

Tension mounted at Katiki village in Firozabad district of Uttar Pradesh on Sunday over the erasure of the name of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar from the entrance gate.

Members of the Dalit community staged a protest demanding restoration of the name on the gate. They also demanded that a statue of Dr. Ambedkar which was vandalised a few days ago be restored. Nagina Lok Sabha member Chandra Shekhar Aazad too reiterated the demand.

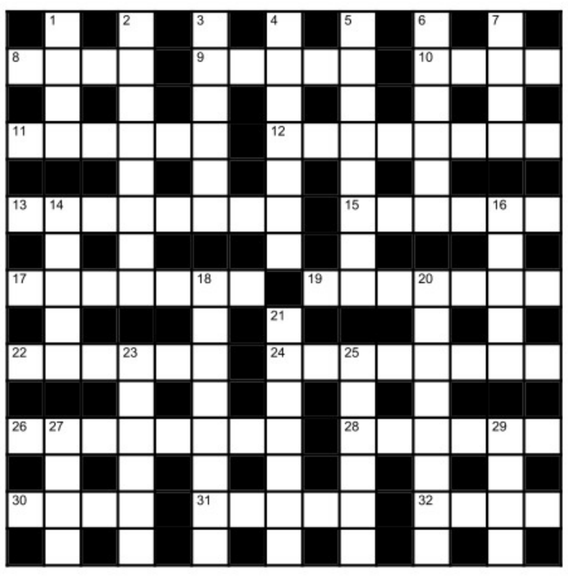
"This incident is not only an insult to the ideals, principles and contribution of Dr. Ambedkar to the country, but also an example of equality, freedom and social justice being crushed in the country," he said, adding that the accused should be arrested immediately.

TH CROSSWORD + 14434

(set by Incognito)

To solve this puzzle online, get across to our crossword site. @ *https://qrgo.page.link/jjpTn*

SCAN TO PLAY



Across

8 Wine from East Indies (4)
9 Engineer and Australian kiss lover boys (5)
10 Organised funeral without enjoyment? True! (4)
11 Sinless beginner? (6)
12 Big animals and insects carrying endless ammunition? (8)
13 New York rejected following river line in Kings county (8)
15 Most recent Los Angeles trial (6)
17 Chinese hate English getting back animal (7)
19 That is carrying rejected pots containing old distinctive variant of element (7)
22 Hates sailor on tailless stallion (6)
24 Before conflict, saint has onset of malaria, having moderately hot temperature (8)
26 Master walks behind university parking located towards source of river (8)
28 Expose to high temperature once again herbal tea brewed after leaving lab (6)
30 French gold for German lady (4)
31 First lady with holy book in party, for example (5)
32 Remove rod from leopard injured in spring (4)

Down

1 Badly built loos in city (4)
2 Nice soil can be made into a polymer (8)
3 Rapel around end of precipice, Basil (6)
4 Red pet leaves rug owned by setter (7)
5 Instances when old sample is spoilt (8)
6 Taste fish containing a bit of yoghurt (3,3)
7 - Run! (4)
14 A herb mixture for addiction therapy (5)
16 Eggless broth in front of queen is excellent (5)
18 Replied, "And sewer is convoluted" (8)
20 Municipality building wall encloses new hotel after initial take over (4,4)
21 One who bangs door in prison (7)
23 Pot? Give it a miss... (3,3)
25 Martial art Shankara teaches to some extent (6)
27 Hair treatment available in supermarket (4)
29 Male following Ms Lovelace is the first man (4)

SUDOKU

	3		2	7	6			
5	8	6	4					
		4		5				
8		5		2				3
	4	2				8	1	
3				6		9		4
				4		1		
					1	2	4	9
			6	9	3		8	

No.SS6461 Distribution: www.knightfeatures.com

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★☆☆☆☆

Solution to previous puzzle

		B	A	N	G	L	A	D	E	S	H	I
S		I		U		E		E	K		N	B
N	I	G	H	T		G	L	A	D	I	A	T	O	R
A		O		R		A		D		P		H		U
P	A	T	R	I	O	T	I	S	M		P	E	R	I
U				E		E					D		S	
P	U	T	I	N			S	A	B	O	T	A	G	E
		R		T					N		R			
G	R	U	E	S	O	M	E			S	I	K	H	S
E		M				O		A		L				I
C	O	P	Y		S	U	N	G	L	A	S	S	E	S
K		E		E		R		L		U		E		T
O	R	D	I	N	A	N	C	E		G	E	N	I	E
S		U		O		E		A		H		O		R
		P	O	L	A	R	I	M	E	T	E	R		

Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

3	1	7	5	2	6	8	4	9
6	2	5	9	4	8	1	3	7
8	9	4	7	3	1	2	5	6
7	4	8	6	5	3	9	2	1
5	6	2	1	7	9	3	8	4
1	3	9	4	8	2	7	6	5
4	8	1	3	9	5	6	7	2
9	7	3	2	6	4	5	1	8
2	5	6	8	1	7	4	9	3

FAITH

Akampana's suggestion

Rama, Sita and Lakshmana have been living a peaceful life in the forest, but trouble begins when Soorpanakha, the sister of Ravana, makes her entry into their lives. She makes overtures to Rama and Lakshmana, and Lakshmana cuts off her nose and ears. Soorpanakha then runs to her brother Khara for help. Khara and another brother Dooshana reside in a place called Janasthana, where there are many other asuras too. She urges Khara to avenge the insult to her. Rama ends up killing Khara, and Dooshana. He kills 14,000 demons. One demon called Akampana runs away from Janasthana and reaches Ravana's court, said Navalpakkam Vasudevachariar in a discourse. Akampana tells Ravana of the wiping out of the demons. He then prays for mercy from Ravana, for he is about to describe Rama's bravery and he knows this will enrage Ravana.

Akampana says Rama is invincible in battle. So, he suggests a way out. It is not that he cares about Rama. He just wants to ensure the safety of his king Ravana. He says that there is a way in which Ravana can have his revenge, without fighting Rama. Akampana says that there is with Rama, His wife Sita, a woman whose beauty is unequalled. Rama and Sita are so devoted that if Sita is taken away from Rama, He will collapse. He says Ravana should abduct Sita. Though Akampana's suggestion is outrageous, at least he has understood one thing – the Divinity of the Rama-Sita union. However, what he does not know is that Rama is enshrined in Sita's heart and She in His, and physical separation will not mean destruction of the connection between them.

Top-up vs. super top-up

COVERNOTE

Vaishali R. Venkat

Most prospective policyholders are often flummoxed by the barrage of jargons tossed at them by health insurance agents. Misinterpretation of jargons might force you to pay through your nose, though.

A single hospitalisation could rob one of lifetime's savings. Considered a lifesaver, a high-cover medical policy helps one avoid paying huge medical bills but with a catch. A base policy (BP) with a high Sum Insured (SI) would not be affordable for many as the premium is high. However, there are cheaper alternatives – top-up and super-top-up plans.

Policyholders often get confused with the two add-on policies and jargons such as deductibles, Unlimited Restoration (UR), etc. Relax, we would arm you with sufficient knowledge.

Shubham Mehrotra, Subject Matter Expert (PW20447), Health Insurance, PolicyBazaar, said, "Both are add-on policies providing an additional protection over and above the SI of the base medical policy, and they could be purchased anytime. That is, both the policies come into force only if the medical bills exceed the deductible amount."

On the difference between the two, Mr. Mehrotra said, "Top-up plan's coverage kicks in only when the deductible limit is reached for every single hospitalisation bill/claim separately. Whereas the super-top-up policy kicks in if the aggregate amount of the multiple claims in a year exceeds the deductible limit together."

What is a deductible?

It is the portion of the hospitalisation bill, which an insurer does not cover and the policyholder must pay via the base policy or from his pocket. That is, the insured must pay the bill up to the deductible amount and only the excess would be paid by the insurer (of the top-up or super-top-up policy). Higher the deductibles, lower would be the premium cost.

How does it work?

Let's understand this with the example of two individuals – Shreyas and Tejas. Deductible ₹5 lakh (BP). Top-up or super-top-up: ₹10 lakh cover over and above deductible.

Shreyas:

First hospitalisation:

Claim: ₹2.5 lakh

Covered: ₹2.5 lakh (from BP)

If top-up: zero (Single claim less than deductible)

If super top-up: zero (Total claim less than deductible)

Second hospitalisation:

Claim: ₹4 lakh

Covered: ₹2.5 lakh (balance SI)

From pocket: ₹1.5 lakh*

If top-up: zero (single claim less than deductible)

If super-top-up: ₹1.5 lakh covered

Reason: Total claim (minus) deductible

Tejas:

First hospitalisation:

Claim: ₹6 lakh

Covered: ₹5 lakh (from BP)

If top-up: ₹1 lakh (excess of deductible)

If super top-up: ₹1 lakh (excess of deductible)

Second hospitalisation:

Claim: ₹4 lakh

Covered: Zero (Remaining SI is nil)

From pocket: ₹4 lakh*

If top-up: zero (Single claim less than deductible)

If super-top-up: ₹4 lakh (Total claim exceeds deductible)

*Unlimited restoration: Whenever a claim is made, the SI is refilled automatically to its initial coverage unlimited times. If Shreyas and Tejas had unlimited restoration benefit in their base policy, they would not have had to pay from their pockets as the SI would have been restored.

Mr. Mehrotra said, "Having a BP with an unlimited restoration benefit and a super-top-up policy with high SI is advantageous for policyholders if they could afford it. If cost is a concern, then a top-up policy could be opted."

(The writer is an NISM & CRISIL-certified wealth manager)

Send queries on personal finance and investing to the moneywise@thehindu.co.in ID. Our experts in personal finance will respond to select queries, but will not give specific recommendations for investment in a particular mutual fund, share or fixed deposit.

ILLUSTRATION: SAAI

Rewards or cashback? Choose credit card wisely

For those with high spends, the smartest approach would be to have both types of credit cards, allowing them to maximise value across different spending categories

METHOD TO SPENDING

Rohit Chhibbar

For a many consumers deciding between a cashback and a rewards credit card can be confusing. While cashback credit cards are attractive due to their straightforward benefit structure, rewards credit cards can enable you to accumulate points that can be redeemed against free flights, hotel stays, products or vouchers.

Both offer value-back on your spends, but the right choice depends on your spending habits and lifestyle. So, how do you choose between the two?

Let us first understand how cashback and rewards credit cards differ.

With cashback credit cards, you get a fixed percentage of the amount spent as value-back, which is usually credited to your statement or a linked wallet, or as points redeemable in 1:1 ratio.

> With cashback credit cards, you get a fixed percentage of amount spent as value-back, which is credited to your account or linked wallet or points redeemable

Upper limit

However, there may be certain terms and conditions. There may be a minimum transaction amount to qualify for the cashback or a cap on the cashback earning. For instance, Cashback SBI Card offers 5% cashback on all online spends and 1% cashback on offline spends, with a combined total cap of ₹5,000 per month.

On the other hand, rewards credit cards offer value-back as reward points, loyalty points, miles, etc., which can be redeemed for travel bookings, vouchers, merchandise, or statement of credit.

For example, HDFC MoneyBack+ Credit Card offers 20 reward points for every ₹150 spent on popular platforms such as Flipkart, Amazon, and Swiggy. These points can be redeemed for cashback, flight and hotel bookings, air miles, and more.

No monetary value

Unlike cashback, reward points do not have an equivalent monetary value. The value of one reward point may vary anywhere between ₹0.10 to ₹1, depending on the card type.

Redemption values may also differ across redemption options of the cards.

For instance, one reward point earned on HDFC Moneyback+ Credit Card equals to ₹0.25, whereas on HDFC Diners Club Black, value of one reward point is ₹1 for travel bookings and ₹0.30 for statement credit.

Validity of reward points is another important feature for consideration when it comes to rewards credit cards.

> Rewards credit cards offer value-back as reward points, loyalty points, miles which can be redeemed for travel bookings, vouchers or merchandise

Cashback vs. Rewards?

The choice between cashback and rewards credit cards depends on your spending habits. Typically, rewards credit cards are ideal for frequent travellers as they offer reward points or miles, which can be redeemed for air miles or hotel bookings, often allowing users to avail free flights or hotel stays.

For instance, Axis Atlas Credit Card offers EDGE Miles as value-back, which can be redeemed for travel booking in 1:1 ratio or transferred to partner air miles or hotel loyalty points in 1:2 ratio.

Direct savings

On the other hand, cashback credit cards provide direct savings by offering a percentage of your spending back as direct cash. This makes cashback cards ideal for those who prefer simplicity over strategic reward earning, tracking and redemption.

Another point to note is that most cashback credit cards belong to the entry-level category and cater to everyday shopping needs. While these cards offer significant savings on select categories, they usually lack additional perks.

On the other hand, rewards credit cards, particularly premium ones, offer additional benefits such as lounge access, complimentary hotel memberships, golf benefits, and more, enhancing the overall value of the card.

For example, Cashback SBI Card, HDFC Millennia, and Amazon Pay ICICI are some of the best cashback credit cards, but their benefits are limited to cashback and online shopping.

In contrast, rewards credit cards like HDFC Regalia Gold, Axis Select and HDFC Diners Club Black offer a wider range of benefits, including lounge access, hotel and dining memberships, vouchers, complimentary golf games, etc.

Though these rewards cards come with comparatively higher annual fees, the added benefits can outweigh the cost for those frequently using the card.

If you want instant value back along with simple and direct benefits, you may choose cashback cards.

However, do note that the right rewards credit card can deliver greater long-term value for the strategic spender. For those with high spends, the smartest approach would be to have both, allowing them to maximise value across different spending categories.

(The writer is chief business officer, credit cards, Paisabazaar)

Sequence of returns matters

THINKINVESTOR

The optimal way to moderate sequence of returns risk (SORR) is to reduce your equity investment as you approach the last five years of the time horizon for achieving a life goal

Venkatesh Bangaruswamy

It is normal to be concerned about the risk of negative returns (market risk) on equity investments. The impact such negative returns can have on your portfolio is related to the stage of your investing life and is referred to as the sequence of returns risk (SORR). Here, we explain SORR and discuss how you can moderate this risk.

Danger zone

A 10% decline in the market will hurt equity investments more when you are closer to retirement than when you are starting your career. This is because the equity portfolio will be large when closer to retirement. A 10% loss on ₹5 crore is significant compared with 10% loss on ₹5 lakh.

You will make annual contributions to goal-based portfolios. So, the size of portfolios will increase each year. Importantly, gains on a larger portfolio will be beneficial and losses on a smaller portfolio is preferable. So, the best sequence of returns is losses at the beginning of investment period and gains towards the end of the time horizon for a life goal. But you are exposed to the risk that your portfolio experiences positive returns during the initial period of the investment and negative returns towards the end of the time horizon for a life goal. This is SORR.

Retirees and SORR

You are exposed to SORR on all goal-based portfolios because you continually invest. As a working executive, you typically face the highest level of SORR on retirement portfolio. Retirees are also exposed to SORR because they continually withdraw money from retirement income portfolio. A portfolio that makes an initial investment without subsequent contribution or withdrawal during the investment period does not suffer from SORR; the sequence in which a 10% loss and a 10% gain occurs is irrelevant, as the end portfolio value will be the same in both scenarios.

Conclusion

The optimal way to moderate SORR is to reduce your equity investment as you approach the last five years of the time horizon for a life goal.

That said, given the size of a retirement portfolio, it is best to start reducing your equity exposure at least 10% before the retirement date.

The sale proceeds from equity must be invested in bank deposits.

You will suffer SORR on investments on which you earn capital appreciation (equity), not on interest income (bank deposits).

(The author offers training programmes for individuals to manage their personal investments)

Personal Loans

Rates and Charges		Loan amount 5 lakh Tenure 5 years	Loan amount 1 lakh Tenure 5 years	(% of loan amount)
Name of Lender	**Interest Rate (%)**	**EMI (Rs)**	**EMI (Rs)**	**Processing fee**
HDFC Bank	10.85-24.00	10,834-14,384	2,167-2,877	Up to Rs 6,500
Tata Capital	11.99 onwards	11,120 onwards	2,224 onwards	Up to 4%
State Bank of India	11.45-14.85	10,984-11,856	2,197-2,371	NIL
ICICI Bank	10.85-16.65	10,834-12,332	2,167-2,466	Up to 2%
Bank of Baroda	11.05-18.50	10,884-12,833	2,177-2,567	Up to 2% (Max Rs 10,000)
Axis Bank	11.25-22.00	10,934-13,809	2,187-2,762	Up to 2%
Kotak Mahindra Bank	10.99-16.99	10,869-12,424	2,174-2,485	Up to 5%
Bank of India	11.60-16.20	11,021-12,212	2,204-2,442	Up to 1% (Mini Rs 250and Maximum Rs 15,000)
Canara Bank	10.70-16.15	10,797-12,199	2,159-2,440	Up to 0.50% (Maximum Rs 2,500)
Punjab National Bank	11.15-17.70	10,909-12,615	2,182-2,523	Up to 1%
HSBC Bank	10.15-16.00	10,660-12,159	2,132-2,432	Up to 2%
Federal Bank	11.99 onwards	11,120 onwards	2,224 onwards	Up to 3%
Union Bank of India	11.10-15.20	10,896-11,948	2,179-2,390	Up to 1% (Maximum Rs 7,500)
Bajaj Finserv	10.00-31.00	10,624-16,485	2,125-3,297	Up to 3.93%
Punjab & Sind Bank	11.10-13.85	10,896-11,595	2,179-2,319	0.50%-1%
Indian Overseas Bank	10.75-14.15	10,809-11,673	2,162-2,335	Up to 0.75%
UCO Bank	10.95-13.95	11,236-11,621	2,172-2,324	Up to 1% (Minimum Rs 750)
IDFC First Bank	10.99 onwards	10,869 onwards	2,174 onwards	2%
Bank of Maharashtra	9.75-14.55	10,562-11,777	2,112-2,355	Up to 1% (Max. Rs 10,000)
Central Bank of India	10.85-12.65	10,834-11,287	2,167-2,257	NIL
IndusInd Bank	10.49 onwards	10,744 onwards	2,149 onwards	Up to 3.5%

Car Loans

Rates and Charges		Loan amount 5 lakh Tenure 5 years	(% of loan amount)
Name of Lender	**Interest Rate (%)**	**EMI (Rs)**	**Processing fee**
Union Bank of India	8.45-10.20	10,246 - 10,673	Up to Rs 1,000
Punjab National Bank	8.50-10.35	10,258 - 10,710	Up to 0.25% (Rs. 1,000 - Rs. 1,500)
Bank of Baroda	8.90-12.45	10,355 - 11,236	Up to Rs 750
UCO Bank	8.35-11.00	10,222 - 10,871	NIL
State Bank of India	9.10-10.15	10,403 - 10,660	NIL
IDBI Bank	8.80 - 9.60	10,331 - 10,525	Rs 2,500
Bank of Maharashtra*	8.45-12.75	10,246 - 11,313	0.25% of loan amount (max. up to Rs. 15,000)
Indian Overseas Bank**	8.40 - 12.00	10,234 - 11,122	0.50% (Rs 500 - Rs 5,000)
ICICI Bank	9.10 onwards	10,403 onwards	Up to 2%
HDFC Bank	9.20 onwards	10,428 onwards	Up to 1% (Rs 3,500 - Rs 9,000)
Karnataka Bank	9.32-13.00	10,457 - 11,377	Up to 0.60% (Rs 2500 - Rs 11,000)
Federal Bank	10.40% onwards	10,722 onwards	Rs 2,000 - Rs 4,500
Punjab and Sind Bank***	8.70-10.10	10,307 - 10,648	0.25% (Rs 1,000-Rs 15,000)
Indian Bank	8.50-9.85	10,258 - 10,587	Rs. 1000
IDFC First Bank	9.99 onwards	10,621 onwards	Up to Rs 10,000
City Union Bank	14.45-14.95	11,751 - 11,882	1.25% (Min: Rs 1000)

*0.25% interest rate concession for existing housing loan borrowers and corporate salary account holders
**0.50% interest rate concession to borrowers with credit scores of 800 and above. Interest rate concession of 0.25% to borrowers having credit scores of 750-799
***Concession of up to 50% on processing fee for PSB Apna Vahan Sugam.

Rates and charges as on March 12 **Source: Paisabazaar.com**

SAN SALVADOR

U.S. flies alleged gang members to El Salvador despite court objection

AFP

The U.S flew over 200 alleged members of a Venezuelan gang to be imprisoned in El Salvador, after Donald Trump invoked wartime legislation to expel the migrants. The deportations took place despite a U.S. federal judge granting a temporary suspension of the order, apparently as planes were already headed to El Salvador. AFP

DHAKA

Bangladesh court grants death to students for lynching varsity mate

REUTERS

The High Court upheld a trial court verdict handing down the death penalty to 20 students of an elite university here for beating to death a fellow student 'over his political affiliation' in 2019. All convicts belonged to the disbanded Bangladesh Chhatra League, the student wing of deposed PM Sheikh Hasina's Awami League. PTI

RIO DE JANEIRO

Brazil's Bolsonaro blasts election ban as 'denial of democracy'

AFP

Brazil's former President Jair Bolsonaro, accused of an attempted coup, told a demonstration in Rio de Janeiro on Sunday that a ban on him seeking re-election in 2026 was a "denial of democracy." The former far-right leader made the remarks while addressing a rally attended by thousands of supporters at the Copacabana beach. AFP

KATHMANDU

Nepal PM tells pro-monarchists democracy has no 'reverse gear'

AP

Taking a dig at pro-monarchist groups in Nepal, Prime Minister K P Sharma Oli said democracy, like a "highway", has no "reverse gear", only the occasional sharp turn demands a momentary shift back. Last week, hundreds of supporters of former King Gyanendra Shah organised a rally to welcome the former monarch in the capital. PTI

Not for Russia to decide on peacekeepers in Kyiv: France

Reuters
PARIS

The stationing of peacekeeping troops in Ukraine, as proposed by Britain and France as part of a ceasefire agreement with Russia, is a question for Kyiv to decide and not Moscow, French President Emmanuel Macron said.

"Ukraine is sovereign. If it asks for allied forces to be on its territory, it's not something for Russia to accept or not," Mr. Macron said. Mr. Macron also said any peacekeeping force would consist of "a few thousand troops per country", adding a number of European and non-European countries were interested in participating.

Trump and Putin to discuss Ukraine ceasefire this week

Steve Witkoff, the U.S. President's envoy for the conflict, confirms the development in an interview, by saying the two leaders are going to have a really good and positive discussion this week

Agence France-Presse
WASHINGTON

U.S. President Donald Trump and Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin are expected to speak this week, officials said on Sunday, as Washington and Kyiv's European allies press Moscow to accept a ceasefire in the three-year war.

The U.S. this week proposed a halt in fighting in the war after talks in Saudi Arabia, with Kyiv accepting the proposal. Mr. Putin however has given no clear answer, instead listing a string of conditions and raising "serious questions" over the proposition.

Consoling hug: Residents at the site of the residential buildings hit by a Russian air strike in Kherson in Ukraine on Saturday. REUTERS

Mr. Trump's envoy for the conflict, Steve Witkoff, who met for several hours with Mr. Putin days ago, told *CNN* in a televised interview that he thinks "the two Presidents are going to have a really good and positive discussion this week."

Earlier, Moscow had said that U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio called his Russian counterpart Sergei Lavrov and that the pair had discussed "concrete aspects of the implementation of understandings" at a U.S.-Russia summit in Saudi Arabia last month.

'Kremlin's intention'

Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelenskyy on Saturday accused the Kremlin of not wanting to end the war and warned that Moscow wanted to first "improve their situation on the battlefield" before agreeing to any ceasefire.

Fire rips through nightclub in North Macedonia killing 59

Agence France-Presse
SKOPJE

A fire tore through a nightclub in North Macedonia early on Sunday, killing 59 people, apparently after on-stage fireworks set the venue ablaze, authorities said, announcing arrest warrants for four persons.

They said 155 injured people had been taken to hospitals across the country, 18 of them in critical condition. Some of the more serious cases were to be taken to hospitals in other European countries.

The blaze started in the Club Pulse in the eastern town of Kocani as the place was packed with more than 1,000 mostly young fans attending a concert by a popular hip-hop duo called DNK.

Charred remains: The nightclub in the town of Kocani in North Macedonia that caught fire early on Sunday. AP

The fire was probably caused by pyrotechnic devices "used for light effects," said Interior Minister Pance Toskovski, who visited the scene with Prime Minister Hristijan Mickoski. "Sparks caught the ceiling, which was made of easily flammable material, after which the fire rapidly spread across the whole discotheque, creating thick smoke," Mr. Toskovski said.

The head of the Kocani hospital said that "most of the dead suffered injuries from the stampede". "Seventy of the patients have burns and carbon monoxide poisoning," she said.

SpaceX Crew docks with ISS to reach astronauts stuck in space for 9 months

Agence France-Presse
KENNEDY SPACE CENTER

A pair of astronauts stranded for more than nine months on the International Space Station were a step closer to returning home on Sunday after a replacement crew docked with the orbital outpost.

The astronauts were shown on live TV embracing and hugging their counterparts in zero gravity on the space station shortly after their SpaceX Crew Dragon arrived at 0545 GMT (1115 IST).

Butch Wilmore and Sunitha Williams have been stuck aboard the ISS since June after the Boeing Starliner spacecraft they were testing on its maiden crewed voyage suffered propulsion issues and was deemed unfit to fly them back to Earth.

Sigh of relief: The SpaceX Dragon Crew-10 members clap after entering the International Space Station on Sunday. AFP

Ms. Williams said it was a "wonderful day" and "great to see our friends arrive," speaking shortly after her colleagues emerged onto the orbital lab.

The NASA duo's *Starliner* had returned to Earth empty, without experiencing further major issues – leaving them stuck for nine months after what was meant to have been a days-long roundtrip. Their prolonged stay was significantly longer than the standard ISS rotation for astronauts of roughly six months.

Mr. Wilmore and Ms. Williams will now begin preparing for departure and their ocean splashdown off the Florida coast, no sooner than March 19.

The replacement Crew-10 team had blasted off on Friday from the Kennedy Space Center in Florida.

Three paramilitary troops, two civilians killed in terror attack in Balochistan

Press Trust of India
QUETTA

Five persons, including three Frontier Corps (FC) personnel, were killed and 30 injured after a paramilitary convoy was attacked by suspected Baloch militants on a highway in Noshki district of restive Balochistan of Pakistan on Sunday.

The attack, in which three terrorists died, was claimed by the banned Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA), which hijacked the passenger train Jaffar Express last week.

A police official said evidence from the site of the attack suggested that a suicide attacker rammed an explosive-laden vehicle into the FC convoy on the Noshki-Dalbandin National Highway.

No respite: The remains of a bus after militants drove a vehicle laden with explosives into a paramilitary convoy in Noshki. REUTERS

Three terrorists were killed after the suicide bomber first rammed his motorcycle into the FC convoy. "After the blast, some other terrorists opened fire on the FC personnel but in the retaliatory firing, two of them were killed. Two civilians and three soldiers also died," the police official said.

High intensity blast

Noshki Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Hashim Momand said the blast was of high intensity, and injured at least 30 paramilitary soldiers, who have been moved to a hospital for treatment.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi, and Balochistan Chief Minister Sarfraz Bugti all condemned the attack and expressed sorrow over the loss of lives.

Sport

Arsenal keeps its faint title hopes alive

FOOTBALL

Agencies
LONDON

Arsenal defeated London rival Chelsea 1-0 for its first win in four Premier League games on Sunday as a headed goal by stand-in striker Mikel Merino boosted its faint hopes of catching up with runaway leader Liverpool.

Merino scored in the 20th minute when he stooped to flick his looping header over Robert Sanchez in the Chelsea goal after a Martin Odegaard corner.

The win left second-placed Arsenal 12 points behind Liverpool.

Chelsea is fourth, one point ahead of Manchester City and five behind third-placed Nottingham Forest.

Substitutes Rodrigo Muniz and Ryan Sessegnon struck late to give Fulham a 2-0 win over Tottenham Hotspur.

Kylian Mbappe's brace helped Real Madrid climb top of LaLiga with a 2-1 win at Villarreal on Saturday.

Tijjani Reijnders saved AC Milan's skin in Saturday's 2-1 win against Serie A upstart Como.

The hero: Merino stoops low and flicks on his header for Arsenal's winner. GETTY IMAGES

The results:

Premier League: Arsenal 1 (Merino 20) bt Chelsea 0; Fulham 2 (Muniz 78, Sessegnon 88) bt Tottenham 0.

LaLiga: Leganes 2 (Raba 29, 44) lost to Real Betis 3 (Isco 64-pen, Bakambu 78, Hernandez 82).

On Saturday:

Premier League: Bournemouth 1 (Janelt 17-og) lost to Brentford 2 (Wissa 30, Norgaard 71).

LaLiga: Valladolid 0 lost to Celta Vigo 1 (Alonso 83-pen); Mallorca 2 (Asano 65, Muriqi 90+7-pen) bt Espanyol 1 (Muriqi 53-og).

Villarreal 1 (Foyth 7) lost to Real Madrid 2 (Mbappe 17, 23).

Girona 1 (Stuani 64) drew with Valencia 1 (Diego Lopez 58).

Serie A: AC Milan 2 (Pulisic 53, Reijnders 76) bt Como 1 (Da Cunha 33).

Monza 1 (Izzo 60) drew with Parma 1 (Bonny 84); Udinese 0 lost to Verona 1 (Duda 72).

Bundesliga: RB Leipzig 2 (Simons 18, Openda 48) bt Borussia Dortmund 0.

Shi and An win All England crowns for the second time

Sports Bureau

Top seed Shi Yuqi beat Chinese Taipei's Lee Chia Hao in straight games to win the All England Open title for a second time in Birmingham on Sunday.

The world No. 1 won the opening game 21-17. Shi, who clinched his maiden title in 2018, prevailed 21-19 in a hard-fought second game to close out the final.

South Korea's An Se Young edged out China's Wang Zhi Yi 13-21, 21-18, 21-18 to clinch the women's title for the second time. The 23-year-old bounced back after losing the opening game to add to her 2023 triumph.

On top: Shi won the final in straight games while An had to dig deep. AP

The results: Finals: Men: Shi Yuqi (Chn) bt Lee Chia Hao (Tpe) 21-17, 21-19.

Women: An Se Young (Kor) bt Wang Zhi Yi (Chn) 13-21, 21-18, 21-18.

Women's doubles: Nami Matsuyama & Chiharu Shida (Jpn) bt Yuki Fukushima & Mayu Matsumoto (Jpn) 21-16, 14-21, 21-17.

Men's doubles: Seo Seung Jae & Kim Won Ho (Kor) Leo Rolly Carnando & Bagas Maulana (Ina) 21-19, 21-19.

Mixed doubles: Guo Xinwa & Chen Yufei (Chn) bt Feng Yan Zhe & Wei Yaxin (Chn) 21-16, 10-21, 23-21.

KEEP PUSHING

I know what I'm capable of, but it's obviously just round one: Norris

GETTY IMAGES

McLaren's Lando Norris, who won an incident-filled Australian Grand Prix, looked ahead to the season. "I know what I'm capable of, but obviously it's just round one... we need to go and do it again next weekend and then continue from there. A long season ahead, we've just got to keep our head down and keep pushing," he said.

BAD PLOY

Boxing too late for inters cost us: Hamilton on frustrating start

GETTY IMAGES

"The rain always mixes things up and strategy comes down to timing and a bit of luck. We took a gamble and made up places, but then boxing too late for inters (intermediate tyres) cost us, dropping us to the back of the top 10," said Lewis Hamilton after a disappointing 10th-place finish on his Ferrari debut.

WITTY RIPOSTE

I'll add that to the words of wisdom: Leclerc after 'water-leak' confusion

GETTY IMAGES

Ferrari's Charles Leclerc reacted sarcastically after a confusion while communicating to the dugout about a water leak in his car. "I have the seat full of water," Leclerc said. The Engineer's answer of "must be the water" made Leclerc reply with a "I'll add that to the words of wisdom".

DREAM START

Mercedes teen Antonelli makes stellar debut at Albert Park

GETTY IMAGES

Kimi Antonelli's fourth place finish in the Australian GP made him the youngest F1 debutant to score points and the second youngest ever after Red Bull's Max Verstappen. Four out of the six rookies failed to finish. After qualifying 16th, Antonelli worked his way through three safety cars and found himself gunning for a podium spot.

Lights to flag

Norris, who has now won back-to-back races for the first time in his career, is the first McLaren driver to do so since Hamilton (Turkey-Canada in 2010)

1 **Leclerc** is the first driver to outqualify or outfinish Hamilton in their first race as teammates since McLaren's Alonso in 2007

Alonso is the first driver to make 20 appearances at Albert Park, and the only one to compete in 22 seasons

5 With a fifth-place finish, Albon has equalled his 2024 points tally in just one race. He registered his best finish since Abu Dhabi 2020 and also Williams' best result since Spa 2021 (second spot for Russell)

The 25-year-old British racer is also the first McLaren driver to lead the F1 drivers' championship since Hamilton in 2012

McLaren has won the final race of a season and the opener of the next for the first time since 1997-98

2 Antonelli (18y 6m 13d) is the second-youngest points-scorer in F1 after Verstappen (17y 5m 29d)

10 The British drivers now have the most wins at Albert Park, breaking the tie with Germans

11 Hamilton's second-longest winless streak of his career, the previous longest being 56

12 McLaren overtakes Ferrari for most Australian GP wins since the event joined the F1 calendar in 1985

19 **Hamilton** is the fourth driver (Schumacher, Raikkonen and Alonso) to score at least a point in 19 seasons

1029 For the first time in more than 1000 days (1,029), a driver other than Verstappen is leading the drivers' championship

COMPILED BY ANIRUDH VELAMURI

Norris reigns in Australian GP

The Briton takes the chequered flag by less than a second from Verstappen with Mercedes' Russell third after a chaotic season-opener

Champagne moment: Norris celebrates on the podium along with Marshall, chief designer of McLaren, Verstappen and Russell. GETTY IMAGES

FORMULA ONE

Agence France-Presse
MELBOURNE

Lando Norris kept his cool in a rain-hit and action-packed season-opening Australian Grand Prix Sunday to edge World champion Max Verstappen with Lewis Hamilton 10th on his Ferrari debut.

The pole-sitting Briton took the chequered flag by less than a second from the Dutchman, with Mercedes' George Russell third after a chaotic race in Melbourne that saw three drivers crash before the end of the first lap.

With the safety car repeatedly forced into action after a slew of accidents on the wet Albert Park circuit, Norris held on to clock a fifth Grand Prix win and second in a row after topping the podium at the final race of 2024 in Abu Dhabi.

Red Bull rookie Isack Hadjar, Alpine's Jack Doohan and Williams' Carlos Sainz – last year's winner – all failed to finish the first lap on a track made treacherous by earlier torrential rain.

Norris cemented his status as the man to beat.

Uncharacteristic error

Verstappen, who is aiming to become only the second driver to win five straight world titles after Michael Schumacher, was in the hunt early but an uncharacteristic error on lap 18 dented his chances until another safety car put him back in the frame.

In the unpredictable conditions, with rain on-and-off, Mercedes' Kimi Antonelli was an eye-opening fourth on his debut while Williams' Alex Albon came an encouraging fifth.

Aston Martin's Lance Stroll was sixth ahead of Nico Hulkenberg in a Sauber. Ferrari's Charles Leclerc came eighth, with Norris' teammate Oscar Piastri and Hamilton rounding out the top 10.

The results: 1. Lando Norris (McLaren) 1hr:42min:6.304s, 2. Max Verstappen (Red Bull) + 0.895sec, 3. George Russell (Mercedes) 8.481, 4. Kimi Antonelli (Mercedes) 10.135, 5. Alexander Albon (Williams) 12.773, 6. Lance Stroll (Aston Martin) 17.413, 7. Nico Hulkenberg (Sauber) 18.423, 8. Charles Leclerc (Ferrari) 19.826, 9. Oscar Piastri (McLaren) 20.448, 10. Lewis Hamilton (Ferrari) 22.473, 11. Pierre Gasly (Alpine) 26.502, 12. Yuki Tsunoda (Red Bull) 29.884, 13. Esteban Ocon (Haas) 33.161, 14. Oliver Bearman (Haas) 40.351.

DNF: Liam Lawson (Red Bull), Carlos Sainz (Williams), Isack Hadjar (Red Bull), Fernando Alonso (Aston Martin), Jack Doohan (Alpine), Gabriel Bortoleto (Sauber).

Standings: Drivers: 1. Norris 25, 2. Verstappen 18, 3. Russell 15, 4. Antonelli 12, 5. Albon 10, 6. Stroll 8, 7. Hulkenberg 6, 8. Leclerc 4, 9. Piastri 2, 10. Hamilton 1.

Constructors: 1. McLaren 27, 2. Mercedes 27, 3. Red Bull 18, 4. Williams 10, 5. Aston Martin 8, 6. Sauber 6, 7. Ferrari 5.

Reshuffled Titans need to solve their jigsaw

S. Prasanna Venkatesan

Gujarat Titans has the best win-loss ratio (1.647) of all the Indian Premier League teams, courtesy of its splendid two-year run since its inception. After a title win and a runner-up finish, it failed to match its standards last season.

This year, it would be a team seeking redemption, filled with players having a point to prove.

In a league that is spoken about as batting-friendly, and in a particularly high-scoring season last year, Titans were the only team to have scored at fewer than nine runs per over (8.71). And the only team to have scored at fewer than eight runs per over in the PowerPlay (7.72).

The side has the fix this time in Jos Buttler, who is coming off a lean patch with the bat. Buttler should ideally open with Shubman Gill to maximise the PowerPlay. With Sai Sudharsan at No. 3, Titans have a solid top-order.

Uninspiring

The middle-order is uninspiring. A solid Indian batter would be sorely missed. As it is, Shahrukh Khan might get to play at No. 4, an ideal opportunity for him to redeem himself.

IPL-18 COUNTDOWN

Gujarat Titans

THE DUGOUT

Shubman Gill (Capt.), Jos Buttler, Kumar Kushagra, Anuj Rawat, Sherfane Rutherford, Glenn Phillips, Nishant Sindhu, Mahipal Lomror, Washington Sundar, Mohd. Arshad Khan, Sai Kishore, Jayant Yadav, Karim Janat, Sai Sudharsan, Shahrukh Khan, Kagiso Rabada, Mohammed Siraj, Prasidh Krishna, Manav Suthar, Gerald Coetzee, Gurnoor Singh Brar, Ishant Sharma, Kulwant Khejroliya, Rahul Tewatia, Rashid Khan.

THE DRIVING FORCE

RASHID KHAN: One of the best multi-utility T20 players in the world, he has an ICC award for validation. Titans would want him to replicate his 2023 performance: 27 wickets at an economy rate of 8.23 (overall 6.82) and 130 runs at a strike rate of 216.66. The determined Afghan can make an impact in a few deliveries with the ball, bat or on the field.

OVERALL NUMBERS

M	W	L
45	28	17

BY OPPONENT

	M	W	L
CSK	7	4	3
RR	6	5	1
LSG	5	4	1
MI	5	3	2
PBKS	5	3	2
DC	5	2	3
RCB	5	2	3
SRH	4	3	1
KKR	3	2	1

GT'S 2025 LEAGUE CAMPAIGN

March 25	vs PBKS	Ahmedabad	7.30 p.m.
March 29	vs MI	Ahmedabad	7.30 p.m.
April 2	vs RCB	Bengaluru	7.30 p.m
April 6	vs SRH	Hyderabad	7.30 p.m.
April 9	vs RR	Ahmedabad	7.30 p.m.
April 12	vs LSG	Lucknow	3.30 p.m.
April 19	vs DC	Ahmedabad	3.30 p.m.
April 21	vs KKR	Kolkata	7.30 p.m
April 28	vs RR	Jaipur	7.30 p.m.
May 2	vs SRH	Ahmedabad	7.30 p.m.
May 6	vs MI	Mumbai	7.30 p.m.
May 11	vs DC	Delhi	7.30 p.m.
May 14	vs LSG	Ahmedabad	7.30 p.m.
May 18	vs CSK	Ahmedabad	3.30 p.m.

Champion 2022

Titans could've gone for a strong Indian middle-order batter at the auction instead of splurging money on Prasidh Krishna (₹9.50 Cr), who might not even play, considering the pace-bowling riches it has.

Rashid Khan

Birdman Glenn Phillips, who's lately been in good touch, could play at No. 5. Shahrukh and Phillips can neither be slotted as solid nor consistent. Titans would be served well if they are to be.

Hamstrung by injuries, the team combination turned out to be an unsolved jigsaw puzzle for Titans last season. An unstable line-up was a reason why the team crashed out without making the playoffs.

With a group of multi-utility players to choose from – Washington Sundar, Sai Kishore, Sherfane Rutherford, Manav Suthar, Rahul Tewatia, and Gerald Coetzee among others – the team might struggle to settle for a combination once again.

As far as the bowling is concerned, Titans can rely on two proven world-class T20 specialists in Rashid Khan and Kagiso Rabada. But again, both Rashid and Rabada are redemption-seekers, coming off a dull last season.

Gill and Rashid need to maintain their impact from 2023 for Titans to make it to the playoffs.

Big guns fire at the right time for Harmanpreet's side

WPL

Vivek Krishnan
MUMBAI

In the end, three of the top-five run-getters in the third season of the Women's Premier League (WPL) belonged to Mumbai Indians. Three of the top five wicket-takers, including Amelia Kerr and Hayley Matthews sharing a joint-best of 18 scalps each, also wore the blue of MI.

Lifting titles and winning tournaments essentially boil down to having your best players step up in a big way at different stages. And MI, as it rejoices a second title in three years, had more top-notch contributors than any other franchise.

Take the two most important matches of MI's season. In the Eliminator against Gujarat Giants, Nat Sciver-Brunt and Hayley Matthews stepped up with the bat with scores of 77 each. With the ball, Sciver-Brunt, Matthews, Amelia Kerr and Shabnim Ismail were all among the wickets.

In Saturday's final versus Delhi Capitals, Harmanpreet Kaur walked into a precarious situation and responded with a knock of the highest quality. In the field, defending a modest total of 149 for seven, MI's bowling unit was more than the sum of its parts as it applied the squeeze on the Capitals batters. All its five bowlers contributed to the wickets column.

Champion stuff: Mumbai Indians raised its game in the climactic stages of the competition. EMMANUAL YOGINI

MI's opponents in these crunch games didn't have a similar output from their A-list performers.

After the final, MI coach Charlotte Edwards lauded Harmanpreet's standout innings and leadership traits. But amid the euphoria, she didn't forget to underline the importance of the whole team working in unison towards a successful campaign.

"Harmanpreet has been really calm. And she did everything in her power, didn't she, with the innings she played. She brings out the best in our young players and works brilliantly with all our overseas and experienced players. And I think something that sets us apart is that we work as a team, we play as a team and tonight [Saturday] was a real team performance," Edwards told reporters.

MI's three world-class overseas all-rounders are intrinsic to the team's results. Both Matthews and Sciver-Brunt are in the top-five run-getters and wicket-takers this year. Kerr didn't quite click with the bat over the past month, but she is a celebrated member of MI's star-studded line-up given her propensity to strike with her bag of tricks as a wrist spinner.

"At the start of this whole MI journey, we went for overseas all-rounders. And we've got three of the absolute best," Edwards said. "They've been fundamental to our success over the last three seasons."

The occasion got to the players: DC coach

Vivek Krishnan
MUMBAI

In 2023 and 2024, Delhi Capitals seemed to be heading towards defeat at the halfway stage of the Women's Premier League (WPL) final. Against Mumbai Indians in the inaugural season, a total of 131 for nine was all Meg Lanning's team managed after electing to bat. Last year, against Royal Challengers Bengaluru, it was bundled out for 113 as Smriti Mandhana & Co. clinched an eight-wicket win.

During the mid-innings break of the final at the Brabourne Stadium on Saturday, in contrast, DC felt it was in the ascendancy, and backed its chances of chasing down 150 and winning its maiden title. But the batters faltered at the final hurdle yet again as MI sealed an eight-run victory.

"We have had three great seasons. To finish top of the table for three years running, we have played some amazing cricket. Everyone is hurting a huge amount at the moment. Around 99% of the time, you back yourself to chase 150 on that wicket there today," Capitals coach Jonathan Batty said after a bitter end to the tournament.

"The final is a big match. Maybe, the occasion just got to the players. But full credit to the MI bowlers for the way they bowled to defend that total. They executed their skills really well and made it really hard for us as a batting unit."

Did the disappointment of losing the preceding two finals also have a bearing on the players heading into this fixture? "There was no negative talk about, 'oh, we've messed up in the last two finals. We're going to take that baggage into this'. There was none of that".

Final jinx: It was a case of so near yet so far for Delhi Capitals. EMMANUAL YOGINI

INBRIEF

Jamieson & Co. wreak havoc, Kiwis thump Pakistan

Pakistan slumped to a nine-wicket loss in the first T20I against New Zealand in Christchurch on Sunday after failing to defend a meagre score of 91. The tourist began the five-match series disastrously, getting reduced to 11 for four at the end of the fifth over after pacer Kyle Jamieson ran amok with the new ball. The side was eventually dismissed for its lowest score in a T20 on New Zealand soil and the host had few problems in responding with a 92 for one off just 10.1 overs.

The scores: Pakistan 91 in 18.4 overs (Jamieson 3/8, Duffy 3/14) lost to New Zealand 92/1 in 10.1 overs (Seifert 44).
Toss: NZ; **PoM:** Jamieson.

Top seed Clarke wins ITF title in Chandigarh

Top seed Jay Clarke of Britain beat third seed Woobin Shin of Korea 7-6(5), 4-6, 6-0 in the final of the $15,000 ITF men's tennis tournament at the CLTA Complex in Chandigarh on Sunday. It was the 13th singles title in the professional circuit for the 26-year-old Briton who was ranked a career-best 153 in 2019.

Draper upsets Alcaraz to set up title clash with Rune

Jack Draper ended Carlos Alcaraz's bid for a rare Indian Wells ATP Masters three-peat on Saturday, toppling the Spaniard to book a title clash with Holger Rune. Britain's Draper, ranked 14th in the world, held his nerve to beat Alcaraz 6-1, 0-6, 6-4 and reach the first Masters 1000 final of his career. Denmark's Rune, ranked 13th, triumphed 7-5, 6-4 over world No. 6 Daniil Medvedev – who had been runner-up to Alcaraz each of the past two years. Draper ended Alcaraz's 16-match winning streak in the California desert, leaping out of the gate and wrapping up the first set in 23 minutes as Alcaraz failed to get to grips with the left-hander's serve. "It was a strange match in all honesty," Draper said. "Carlos came out a little flat, I sensed that. I had a chance in the first game of the second, and he came up with an ace," he added. "All I can say is Jack came, he played much better than me," Alcaraz said.

Dream-catcher: Sarah took some important catches and effected a few spectacular stumpings. SPORTZPICS/WPL

Sarah's 'glove story' an inspiration back home

Her older sister, Kathryn Bryce, played for Gujarat Giants last year and the two turned out for Scotland in the recent T20 World Cup in the UAE

WPL

P.K. Ajith Kumar

The WPL allows a team to field a fifth foreigner as long as she comes from an associate nation. Delhi Capitals made use of that provision in the just-concluded third edition, handing the keeping gloves to Sarah Bryce of Scotland. And Bryce grabbed that opportunity with both her gloves.

She took some important catches and effected a few spectacular stumpings, two of which happened within a space of six balls in the match against UP Warriorz at Vadodara.

Smart

She was smart, agile and really quick to surprise Deepti Sharma and Tahlia McGrath. She also scored a 10-ball 21 down the order in DC's last ball victory against Mumbai Indians.

And watching her do all that from the stands were her parents, James and Susan, who flew down from Edinburgh.

"We decided to come to India to watch the WPL as soon as she was selected by Delhi Capitals," said James, a former university lecturer in plant science. "It was great that we could watch her play and do well."

Proud parents: Susan and James Bryce flew down from Edinburgh to watch their daughter in action in the WPL. P.K. AJITH KUMAR

They had both come to India last year too, as their elder daughter Kathryn Bryce had played for Gujarat Giants.

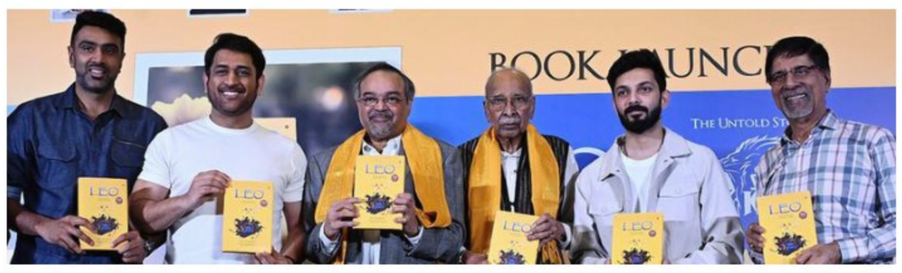
"It is really a nice thing that the associate players are getting an opportunity at the WPL," said the proud mother Susan, a retired geriatrics doctor at the NHS in the UK.

"And Tara Norris (of the United States) also did well when she got a chance in the first WPL, didn't she? My daughters playing at the WPL is a big inspiration for all the girls playing cricket back home in Scotland."

Women's cricket is getting better in Scotland, said Susan. The sisters had played at the recent T20 World Cup in the UAE.

"Scotland qualifying for the World Cup was a really big step up for them," she said. "It was a tremendous experience for them, really. They have both had very good 12 months. They won the Charlotte Edwards Cup and played in the WBBL, too."

In the Charlotte Edwards Cup, Kathryn was the player-of-the-final, top-scoring with 62 for The Blaze against South East Stars, while Sarah made 52 not out.



Grand occasion: Author P.S. Raman (third from left), with C.D. Gopinath (third from right), K. Srikkanth (right), R. Ashwin, M.S. Dhoni and Anirudh Ravichander at the book release. B. JOTHI RAMALINGAM

Leo — The Untold Story officially launched

BOOK ON CSK

Sports Bureau
CHENNAI

A new book on Chennai Super Kings, *Leo – The Untold Story*, authored by senior advocate and former TNCA vice-president P.S. Raman, was officially launched in the presence of former CSK skipper M.S. Dhoni at a star-studded event on Sunday.

Former India cricketer C.D. Gopinath, a member of India's first Test-winning team, unveiled the book. Composer and playback singer Anirudh Ravichander received the first copy. R. Ashwin, who recently retired from international cricket, was felicitated by former India skipper K. Srikkanth.

In his welcome address, Raman spoke about how the idea of the book came about, and also read a passage from his work.

Speaking on the occasion, Gopinath stressed the need to ensure the cricket remains a gentleman's game, played in the right spirit and credited Dhoni for his calm and composed nature on the field.

"My favourite IPL team is Chennai Super Kings. I pick CSK mainly because of MSD – not because of his cricketing brain but because of how he plays. He does not go strutting around the field jumping 10 feet high. He does not make obscene gestures. It makes me very uncomfortable when I see some of that," said Gopinath. "I think it's very unfair and very ungentlemanly. That's not the way it should be played. I know how successful he has been in leading his side and winning tournaments, but playing the game like cricket as it should be played matters to me more than the result. I hope the younger people emulate him."

Ashwin, who will be in CSK colours after a decade, recalled the club's impact on his journey and spoke about how the team still feels the same as it did when he last played for it and is cricket-oriented in its approach.

"I called M.S. (Dhoni) for my 100th Test (in Dharamshala) to hand over the memento. I wanted to make that my last Test. But he couldn't make it. However, I didn't think he would give me the gift of getting me back to CSK. It's a much better one. So thank you MS for doing it. I'm glad to be here," he added.

CSK head coach Stephen Fleming, assistant coach Michael Hussey, and CEO K.S. Viswanathan were also present.

Berry clinches a four-way playoff, wins Kolkata Challenge

Sports Bureau
KOLKATA

Nineteen-year-old Englishman Joshua Berry clinched a four-way playoff to win the $300,000 Kolkata Challenge at the Royal Calcutta Golf Club (RCGC) here on Sunday.

Berry, who set the course record of 10-under 62 in round two, returned a 73 in the last round to tie with Andreas Halvorsen (71), Lukas Nemecz (72) and home favourite Om Prakash Chouhan (70) at 11-under 277.

Berry's 19-foot birdie putt on the second extra hole earned him the title.

On song: Berry's 19-foot birdie putt on the second extra hole earned him the title. FILE PHOTO: GETTY IMAGES

The scores: 1. Joshua Berry (Eng) 277 (72, 62, 70, 73) (won playoff on second extra hole); 2. Om Prakash Chouhan 277 (66, 68, 73, 70), Andreas Halvorsen (Nor) 277 (69, 66, 71, 71), Lukas Nemecz (Aut) (67, 70, 68, 72) 277; 5. Maximilian Steinlechner (Aut) 278 (69, 68, 69, 72).

Hy - CNG Duo available in Hyundai EXTER and Grand i10 NIOS. Space bhi. Mileage bhi.
##Additional scrappage bonus available against valid certificate of deposit. #Additional benefits for CSD and KPKB customers.

Hyundai Click to Buy Scan here
3 YEAR Unlimited** Kilometer Warranty
UPTO 7 YEARS Extended Warranty^
3 YEARS Road Side Assistance (RSA)***
UPTO 5 YEARS Shield of Trust Running Repair Package~
UPTO 5 YEARS Shield of Trust Super Maintenance Package~
Hy - CNG Duo

HYUNDAI

For Information Contact: Toll Free:1800114645 **Bangalore:** Advaith Hyundai, Residency Road, Ph: 9606076451 Marathahalli, Outer Ring Road, Ph: 9606076452 Vasanthnagar, Ph: 9606076453 Bannerghatta Road, Ph: 9606076454 Koramangala, Ph: 9606076455 Avalahalli, Ph: 9606076456, Sarjapura Ph: 9606076458 Bilekahalli, Ph: 9606076457, Trident Hyundai, Sankey Road, Ph: 7353762526, K R Puram, Ph: 9844266873, Hosur Road, Ph: 9743786716, Indiranagar, Ph: 9743107927, Yelahanka, Ph: 7353750677, Yeshwanthpur, Ph: 9844701452, Blue Hyundai, Mysore Road, Ph: 9591100001, Rajajinagar, Ph: 9591200001, Magadi Road, Ph: 9513200033, New Bel Road, Ph: 9513000800, Basavanagudi, Ph: 9591211118, Lakshmi Hyundai, Hebbal Ph: 9900037900, Kalyan Nagar, Ph: 8494913303, HBR Layout, Ph: 8884441111, Whitefield, Ph: 8884497700, Devanahalli, Ph: 8884499037, Pavan Hyundai, Kanakpura Road, Ph: 7337882522, Electronic City, Ph: 7337882522, Dhruvdesh Hyundai, Ph: 9205770577 **Mangalore:** Kanchana Hyundai, Ph: 9900144113, Advaith Hyundai, Ph: 7760962815 **Udupi:** Kanchana Hyundai, Ph: 9972440758 **Mysore:** Advaith Hyundai, Belavadi, Ph: 9620257012 JLB Road, Ph: 9606938831, KPR Hyundai, Mysore Ph: 9606470291 **Hassan:** Advaith Hyundai, Ph: 9606938828 **Shimoga:** Rahul Hyundai, Ph: 6364465441 **Hubli:** Bellad Hyundai, Ph: 9900035084, Raam Hyundai, Ph: 8495072555, **Kanakpura:** Pavan Hyundai, Ph: 7892718572 **Belgaum:** Nagshanti Hyundai, Ph: 9844890456, 9844890459 **Bijapur:** Narayan Hyundai, Ph: 9742272157, 9742272153 **Davanagere:** K J Hyundai, Ph: 7022001201 **Gulbarga:** Shah Hyundai, Ph: 9108049250 **Tumkur:** Pavan Hyundai, Ph: 7337882522 **Bellari:** Anika Hyundai, Ph: 8884484020 **Ramanagara:** Advaith Hyundai, Ph: 9900095504 **Kolar:** Advaith Hyundai, Ph: 9620229885, **Chintamani**: Ph: 8147994737 **Mandya:** Advaith Hyundai, Ph: 9740060075 **Coorg:** Advaith Hyundai, Madikeri, Ph: 9538971151 Gonikoppal, Ph: 9945774088 Kushalnagar, Ph: 9538971149 **Tiptur :** Advaith Hyundai, Ph: 7619577050 **Chikodi:** Nagshanti Hyundai, Ph: 8951947001 **Gokak:** Nagshanti Hyundai, Ph: 8147978240 **Savadatti:** Nagshanti Hyundai, Ph: 8147978240 **Athani:** Nagshanti Hyundai, Ph: 7411307080 **Belthangady:** Advaith Hyundai, Ph: 7760962819 **Sullia:** Advaith Hyundai Ph: 7760962813 **Dharwad:** Bellad Hyundai, Ph: 6364333461, **Hunsur:** KPR Hyundai, Ph: 9538879235 **Channarayapatna:** KPR Hyundai, Ph: 9538879238 **Kollegala:** KPR Hyundai, Ph: 9606478215 **Sakleshpura:** KPR Hyundai, Ph: 9035708716 **Raichur:** Shah Hyundai, Ph: 9108049252 **Bidar:** Shah Hyundai, Ph: 7625093556 **Yadgir:** Shah Hyundai, Ph: 9108049262 **Sindhanur:** Shah Hyundai, Ph: 9071411136/9513897444 **Basavakalyan:** Shah Hyundai, Ph: 7353307776 **Bagalkot:** Narayan Hyundai, Ph: 9742253245 **Jamkhandi:** Narayan Hyundai, Ph: 9742272179 **Madikeri:** Advaith Hyundai, Ph: 9538971151 **Kushalnagar:** Advaith Hyundai, Ph: 9538971149 **Gonikoppa:** Advaith Hyundai, Ph: 9945774088 **Mandya:** Advaith Hyundai, Ph: 9740060075 **Belthangady:** Advaith Hyundai, Ph: 77609 62819 **Sullia:** Advaith Hyundai, Ph: 7760962813 **Chikmagalur:** Rahul Hyundai, Ph: 7795800038 **Sagara:** Rahul Hyundai, Ph: 7625080180 **Thirthahalli:** Rahul Hyundai, Ph: 7625080183 **Shikaripura:** Rahul Hyundai, Ph: 9108843230 **Puttur:** Kanchana Hyundai, Ph: 9740873450 **Surathkal:** Kanchana Hyundai, Ph: 9482574530 **Karkala:** Kanchana Hyundai, Ph: 9740412899 **Kundapura:** Kanchana Hyundai, Ph: 9900145948 **Kumta:** Kanchana Hyundai, Ph: 9535855966 **Sirsi:** Kanchana Hyundai, Ph: 9731856300 **Karwara:** Kanchana Hyundai, Ph: 6364860518, **Hospet:** Anika Hyundai, Ph: 8884484018 **Ballair:** Anika Hyundai, Ph: 8884484020 **Koppal:** Anika Hyundai, Ph: 8884484031

my Hyundai app
Hyundai Promise Certified Pre-Owned Car
Scan to chat with us or give a missed call at 9555295868

*Terms & Conditions apply. Benefits mentioned include applicable cash, exchange and corporate benefits. Benefits may vary with variants. **3-year warranty or upto 100 000 km whichever is earlier for Grand i10 NIOS, AURA, i20 & i20 N Line. 3-year unlimited km warranty is applicable for EXTER, VENUE, VENUE N Line, CRETA, CRETA N Line, CRETA Electric, ALCAZAR, TUCSON, VERNA and IONIQ 5. ^Upto 7 Years extended warranty is available for Grand i10 NIOS, i20, i20 N Line, AURA, VERNA, EXTER, VENUE, VENUE N Line, CRETA, CRETA N Line, CRETA Electric, ALCAZAR & TUCSON in all variants (Petrol/Diesel/CNG) and subject to payment. ***3 years Roadside Assistance (with taxi support & introduction of 10 year retail program). ~For detailed T&C of RSA, Shield of Trust & Super, kindly visit Hyundai India website. This advertisement and car shown here is for creative representation purposes only and the depictions are for illustrative purposes. Features and specifications shown may vary or may not be a part of standard fitment and are subject to change without prior notice. Hyundai Motor India Limited reserves the right to change specifications, colour, equipment and schemes at any time without prior notice. The black shade on glasses are due to lighting effect. Size and colour may appear to vary due to lighting and position effect. Extended Warranty and Shield of Trust & Super are on payable basis. For more details on warranty, please refer owners' manual, ##Scrappage bonus is applicable on select models subject to receipt of valid Certificate of Deposit issued by Govt. approved & operational vehicle scrappage center. #CSD: Canteen Stores Department, KPKB: Kendriya Police Kalyan Bhandar.

INNOCEAN-012/25

A BG-BGE